

Change or continuity?

Becoming a young mother in an Argentinean shantytown

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Abstract

In this thesis I discuss how having a child at a young age affects the life projects of young girls. In the fall of 2008 I did qualitative interviews with nine young mothers living in an Argentinean shantytown, which provide the basis for the analysis. My research shows that the majority of my informants experience their pregnancy as mistimed - they wanted to become mothers, but would have preferred to finish secondary school before having children.

Since the post-war era, young mothers have been a stigmatized group in many countries. Early motherhood has been said to be the cause of bad health, poverty and bleak future aspects. Thus, this has been classified as a social problem and something that ought to be minimized. Later research has shown that a lot of these effects are a result of poverty rather than the age of becoming a mother in itself. The negative consequences are also smaller than previously thought. This contra-hegemonic twist within the research has been based on qualitative research methods, to include the voices of the girls themselves, and also to obtain a more nuanced picture of young motherhood.

In 2008, Argentina was still affected by the neo-liberal economy of the 90s, as well as the social and economic crisis that hit the country in 2001. The ones who were hit the hardest were the young and poor. Growing up in poverty and unemployment also has different effects depending on gender. In a context with reduced possibilities of education and work, motherhood can be considered a preferable life project by many girls. In Argentina today, 16% of all children are born from a teenage mother. However, the number varies with geography and social class. In Villa Soldati, where my informants live, teenage mothers give birth to one third of all children.

With this backdrop, I wanted to find out how an early entry into motherhood affected the life projects of teenage girls. To answer this I covered aspects such as; What was the context of the pregnancy? Was this an interruption – and of what? And how did having a child affect their life project and their future plans?

There are several interesting findings in my research. All the girls classified their pregnancy as unexpected. However, despite knowing there was a risk of getting pregnant, the majority of my informants used contraception highly irregularly. In addition to cultural restrictions

related to sexuality and gender, it seems as there might have been a lack of motivation not to get pregnant. The girls who were most committed to education were also more motivated to postpone motherhood, by using contraception and considering abortion. This underlines the importance of a future project other than motherhood.

Education represented a hope of social mobility and material security, but was also valued for its ability to create a social identity, set a good example and being a part of being a good mother. Following motherhood, some managed to continue their education with the support of their family, partner and a flexible school system. For others, lack of child care and financial restrictions were some of the challenges that created problems for their schooling, even though some of them were still motivated to continue. However, for the majority of them, their main life project was to finish school, have their own house and a family. Therefore, having a child at this age would mean a change and adaption to the original plan rather than a break from it. For some of the girls who aspired to university education, having a child reduced their ambitions and led them to adapt to a shorter career. Once a mother, future projections revolved around working, getting a house and provide for a good future for their children.

My findings seem to confirm earlier research on the field, not only from Argentina but also from countries such as UK and USA. However, there is a need for underlining the heterogeneity within the group of young mothers. Further knowledge about the construction of future projects as well as the effects of an unplanned child is highly necessary. Not only for creating a sociological understanding of the lives millions of young women live, but also for finding new ways of adopting to unplanned motherhood and reducing the negative effects for mother and child.

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1. Introduction

Early childbearing is characterized as a problem. It is also a controversial subject, affecting different aspects of society, questioning morals, sexuality, religion, women's rights and social inequality (McDermott and Graham 2005; Luker 1996). Having a child at an early age is claimed to have various negative effects, such as deepening inter-generational poverty and reducing women's possibilities of education and work (Adaszco 2005). However, research has also underlined the complexity within the category of young mothers and how the negative effects might be less than previously stated (Luker 1996; Stern and Garcia 1996; Furstenberg 1991). Taking the social context into consideration, some even argue that early childbearing is a rational reproductive strategy and that society's attitude towards this is founded in a lack of acceptance of a working class life-course organization (Arai 2003; Geronimus 1993). All aspects considered, there seems to be an increasing acceptance of young motherhood as a highly complex issue, involving class and gender questions, but also cultural aspects and factors such as future expectations and identity (Margulis 2007).

In 2008, 16 % of all children in Argentina were born from a teenage girl (UNDP 2009). Here, young childbearing is a subject of attention for many reasons, it is a class specific phenomenon and is said to be increasing. In 2006, I spent a year as an exchange student at the University of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. During this time, I spent some time doing voluntary work in Villa Soldati, a shantytown located in the south of the city. In this neighbourhood, one third of all births happen to girls under the age of 20 (Zicavo 2007). After getting to know the local area and reading up on the subject, I was curious to how motherhood would affect the life and plans for a young girl restricted by poverty. Two years later, I therefore went back to Soldati to interview nine young mothers about pregnancy, work and education, their current situation as well as their future plans.

This was founded in my question of research;

In an poor neighbourhood in Buenos Aires;

How does an early entry into motherhood affect the life project of a young girl?

Before I develop the locus for this thesis, I will present the geographical context; Argentina and Buenos Aires, focusing on the political and social development within the last decades, which I consider a crucial prerequisite for understanding the current society. My informants, young girls living in Soldati, are also characterized by age, gender and social class, which have some implications I will present afterwards. After this introduction to the local context I will present the concept and the field of research of young motherhood. On this basis I will then develop my question of research and present the further structure of the thesis.

1.1 The context

Knowing the historical and social context is crucial to understanding a subject (Margulis 2007; Urresti 2003). Argentina has a history that is multilayered and complex, characterized by a political volatility that even Argentineans seem to have trouble grasping. With the transition to democracy as background, I shall give a quick introduction to the years leading up to the crisis in 2001 and ultimately today. However, my focus will not be political, but on the social consequences of increased poverty, unemployment and marginalization. The change in social politics has had strong effects on the urbanization in Buenos Aires (Auyero 2000; Svampa 2000), and with the recent rise in inequality and spatial segregation there has also been an increase in the *villas miserias*, the Argentinean shantytowns.

1.1.1 Argentina – an introduction

At the start of the 20th century Argentina was one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Characterized by affluence and immigration, Buenos Aires was said to be the Paris of Latin-America. In the 1940s and 50s, Juan Perón, and maybe his more famous wife, Eva “Evita” Perón, created the foundations of an Argentinean welfare state. This involved social security, public education and health, as well as a close cooperation with the workers unions. Then, in March 1976, Argentina suffered a military coup, which turned out to be the start of a nine-year long dictatorship. During this period, over 30000 were abducted or killed. Later this group came to be known as *los desaparecidos*, the disappeared ones.

When Raul Alfonsín became democratically elected president in 1983, the country was facing severe challenges. The dictatorship had imposed a clear break with the earlier politics

of state intervention, protectionism and import-substitute industrialization (Svampa 2000:15). The consequences of these previous decisions now became visible. Less social welfare, crisis in the provisional system and the public education, coupled with a situation of great foreign debt and an annual inflation of more than three digits, led to a visible worsening of the life quality for the people in the middle- and popular class (Svampa 2000). Nonetheless, it was when President Carlos Menem was elected president in 1989 that Argentina took a new political direction, characterized by a reduction in the state responsibility through a privatization of its most important tasks (Svampa 2000:15). The country sold and privatized public resources, such as gas and oil, as well as infrastructure and companies. They also cut spending in the public sector, which affected among other things education and health. During the 1990s the socioeconomic inequalities strongly increased in the Argentine society. Among other factors, this was a result of the increased unemployment and the decrease in public spending following the severe structural adjustment programs and more neoliberal policy (Svampa 2000:1).

Domingo Cavallo, Argentina's minister of Finance during Menem's presidency, got the necessary support from the IMF to reduce the country's inflation by introducing the so-called convergence-system. Among other things, this meant tying the Argentine peso to the US dollar at a one-to-one rate. Over the years, the pressure to devalue the peso increased, and the convergence ended in 2001. This led to the beginning of the *Argentinazo*, where the 19th and 20th December of 2001 represented one of the worst economic and political crises in Argentinean history. Riots forced President Fernando de la Rúa to leave the 21st of December. The effects of the crisis were devastating. When the peso was devalued to a third of its initial value, millions of Argentines lost their savings. In 2002, unemployment reached an historical high of 21,5 %, and 54,3 % of the population lived in poverty (UNDP 2009). *Los cartoneros*, people collecting and recycling garbage from the streets, were increasing in numbers. A national wave of social movements appeared, workers in abandoned factories occupied and took over their factories, networks of exchange and alternative currencies developed and *los piqueteros*, organized unemployed people, gained force as the whole country found different ways to handle the desperate situation.

Today, the situation is different. From 2003 to 2008, the economy grew with an average of 9% annually, and as a result, both unemployment and poverty was down to 8% and 16 % respectively (UNDP 2009).

1.1.2 Buenos Aires and the increase in shantytowns

Buenos Aires is both a city and a province. While the whole province of Buenos Aires has thirteen million inhabitants, only three million of them live in the city. There are strong socioeconomic differences between the centre and the province; while the wealthiest often live in the centre, the majority of the villas are situated outside the city borders leaving many of the inhabitants to commute to the centre every day to work. Nonetheless, there are also substantial socio-economic disparities within the city centre. An almost incomprehensible distance exists between the richest neighbourhoods like Recoleta, Palermo and Puerto Madero, and the working class neighbourhoods like La Boca or villas like Soldati and Lugano.



Map of Buenos Aires (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires 2003)

The development of the urban space is closely connected to the general politics of the country. By the 1950s and 60s, following the rapid industrialization of Argentina and Buenos

Aires, the city began receiving a great deal of immigrants from the Northern provinces of Argentina, as well as neighbouring countries such as Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru. The sharp increase in population, combined with a lack of infrastructure and city planning, led to an increase in the development of shantytowns in Buenos Aires, especially in the province. Between 1955 and 1970, the amount of people living in villas increased from 80 000 to 800 000 (Eguia and Ortale 2007:19).

During the 1980s and 1990s, as the socioeconomic inequality increased, so was affected the sociogeographical fragmentation within the centre of Buenos Aires. While parts of the middle class transferred into the so-called *barrios cerrados*, private neighbourhoods, there were more people living in the villas (Svampa 2000). While there were 52 000 people living in villas in 1993, ten years later the number was 112 400 (Bianco and Correa 2003:5). The peak however, was reached in 2002 during the crisis, when the villas within the city increased with 43 people every day (La Nacion in Bianco and Correa 2003:5).

A *villa*, an Argentinean shantytown, can be described as an area with the following characteristics; income below the poverty level, high percentage of households with unmet basic needs, adults without formal education (the majority with incomplete primary school), high unemployment, or employment in low quality jobs (Cecconi 2003:178). What characterizes the villas more than anything is precariousness and constant physical risk. The consequences of living in this context are multiple and affect all aspects of life, especially health, family and violence (Cecconi 2003:179). To be a *villero*, someone from a villa, is also a severe cultural stigma and often has criminal or racial connotations (Auyero 2000). In the most recent years, focus on increased crime rates and insecurity in Buenos Aires has also contributed to an increased stigma and exclusion of the inhabitants of the villas (Auyero 2000). The discrimination against people living in a villa has several practical implications, people may for example give a fake address when applying for a job.

1.2 Being a young girl in the popular class

For my informants, age, generation, class and gender are all structures defining their position in the social space (Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman 2009:3). In this part I will therefore give a short introduction to some aspects of youth, class and gender in Argentina today. First I

present some aspects related to their position as being young; the concept and understanding of “youth”, and also how growing up in a very specific historical context might have affected their generation. I will then shortly present class in Argentina, in particular the social class they belong to, *la clase popular*. This social segment is highly complex, and a more accurate description of the local context and neighbourhood, as well as a personal description of each of my informants, will therefore be provided in chapter 4.

1.2.1 Youth and generation

What is “youth” or “adolescence”, and what are the implications of the expectations related to this concept? Age is not only biological, but also a social and cultural construction (Fernández 1993). *“The relationship between biological and social age is complex, socially manipulated and manipulatable, especially for those who have few resources to claim their rights, like the children and adolescents”* (Adazco 2005:39, my translation). Beginning in the 1950’s and up through the 1970’s, the culturally dominant view on the organization of the life course and a definition of “youth” in a western context evolved. However, this image of youth and adolescence has been dominated by the middle class. If there is no recognition of what is being used as the ideal, one is automatically legitimizing the middle class’ hegemonic power over the public, helping to create a doxic image of what a teenager should be and do (Adaszko 2005). One of the consequences is that the inherent differences inherent in the group of adolescents become invisible. As Bourdieu points out, the universal character of the category defines the youngsters in the poor sectors as adolescents similar to the ones from the middle and high class, even though their experiences do not have much in common (Bourdieu 1990 in Adaszko 2005:43).

This homogenic stereotype has been widely criticised by several who argue for a more pluralistic perception of youth (Margulis 2007; Fainsod 2006; Adaszko 2005). Being young in the popular class means something different than being young in the middle or high class (Margulis 2007; Forresti et.al 2007; Cecconi 2003; Pawlowicz 1996:53). Among other things, Margulis (2003) argue that the life span of people living in the Argentinean popular class is often short, and life is being lived more intensely, both in quantity and in quality. Adolescence in the popular class is characterized by a rapid transition and insertion in work

life, and when education is scarce and one starts to work earlier, it is not surprising that one also forms a family earlier (Cecconi 2003).

There seems to be a general agreement that social and economic developments within the latest decades, and especially the effects of the crisis, have had a devastating effect on the young generation (Margulis 2007; Fainsod 2006; Brener and Ramos 2008; Bianco and Correa 2003; Gutiérrez 2003). In 2001, 27 % of the Argentine population was between 10 and 24 years old, and a year later, 70 % of them were classified as poor (Indec in Bianco and Correa 2003:4). Furthermore, Bianco and Correa (2003:35) underlines how there were profound social and psychological effects of the crisis besides the poverty. There were "*more depressions, more addictions, more drop-outs from school and more violence, less illusion, hope and future*" (2003:35). They also noticed an increase in malnutrition, child labour, crimes, unemployment and suicides. Nonetheless, although the effects marked a whole generation, the consequences were still worse for the ones who were more vulnerable to start with (Bonfiglio et.al 2007). Today, the young generation in Argentina, and especially the poorest ones, are still struck hard by unemployment, lack of education and poverty (Carbajal 2009). In 2008, 20 % of those between 15 and 24 years were neither studying nor working (Tercér sector 2008). Mario Margulis (2007), an Argentinean sociologist who specializes in youth culture, calls this *bad free time*, time that does not offer identity or future, but is lived as continuity without breaks or ruptures, as a result of lack of alternatives.

Silvia Duschatzky (2004), who investigates youth, sexuality and education in Argentina, argue that the fatalism produced in a scarce socio-economic situation is reinforced within the generation growing up in a society in post-crisis, as well as being marked by the fluidity of post-modernism where planning for a future has lost its sense. The disappearance of traditions and stability seems to lead to an insecurity that is shaping our minds and the way we think and plan the future. There has been a generational shift in the way of living, from a generation raised to believe in stability, to a generation characterized more than anything by its fluidity, "the logic of now" and an extended fatalism (Duschatzky 2004; Fernández 1993). The lost concept of future is thus not only a trait characterising the ones belonging to the lower classes, but an effect of growing up in a time characterized by significant changes and instability. Without a future, there is no point in making plans and there is nothing to protect. This will also characterise every aspect of how young people chose to live their lives, choosing intensity and the immediateness over stability and future (Duschatzky 2004).

Planning ahead and aversion to risk loses its meaning when everything is risky, and this apparent self-destructive risk-taking becomes a logical consequence of the social context (Cecconi 2003:195).

1.2.2 The popular class

Research on Argentina normally divides the society in three social classes, high, middle, and the popular class (Svampa 2000). *The popular class* describes a sector that does not fit into the definition of the “working class”, as “*the major characteristics of the subordinate classes are not manufacturing work but unemployment, disguised unemployment, the shortage of land, the problems of urban migration, social marginality and ethnic minorities*” (Mattelart 1990:74). Rosa Noemí Geldstein (1994), an Argentinean sociologist who has investigated gender and class in Argentina for years, describes the popular urban sector as; “*the representatives of the basis and the body of the social pyramid, the part of the population most vulnerable to the effects of the excluding economic policies and the consequences of the dominating recessive crisis*” (Geldstein 1994:77, my translation).

Within this social sector however, there is a substantial economic and cultural complexity (Margulis 2007; Cecconi 2003:178). Based on their economic resources, a lot of the *newly poor* might now be included in the popular class even though they are culturally different and have other resources than *the structural poor*, the victims of generational poverty (Margulis 2003:199; Svampa 2000:2). In Buenos Aires, this variety is also a result of the different cultural backgrounds of immigrants from neighbouring countries or other provinces. In addition, through encounters with the urban middle-class they also incorporate other values and principles (Marcús 2006:154; Perez 2007).

1.2.3 Gender roles

Gender intersects with class and subsequently has to be analysed within certain social spectrums. As Perrotta (2007) underlines, “*in addition to have in mind the differences of gender as inequalities between men and women, it is necessary to think of the differences in their relation to social class, age and material conditions of life*” (Perrotta 2008:2, my translation). In Argentina, gender roles tend to be different in the middle class and in the popular class (Aiscar 2005; Pantelides 2004). Within the higher social classes, especially in

the urban areas, a modern female role is often prevalent. This implies an acceptance of working, studying, certain independence and a notion of equality between men and women in most areas of life, even though traditional structures still seem to prevail and accentuate the importance of motherhood and family (Pérez in Margulis 2007). In the popular classes there seems to be a predominance of the traditional female role (Climent 2002; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). Among other things, this means that masculine values are authority, power, and strength while the feminine is characterized by abnegation, sacrifice, obedience and delicateness (Cecconi 2003:188), and “motherhood” as a more defining role.

A similar pattern seems to be valid for the younger generation. The Argentinean researchers Rosa Geldstein and Edith Pantelides (2001) surveyed and interviewed 211 girls aged 15-18, where half were from the upper-middle class and half from the lower class. The focus of their work was gender images, a concept including the representations, values, positions and roles that men and women have, defined as “*a (subjective) reflection of the (internalised) cultural and societal values linked to the gender stratification system*” (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:1, my translation). A modern gender image includes a conception of symmetric gender relations, a feminine identity with the power to decide over self and life projects that includes success in studies and the work life (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:39). In contrast, a traditional gender image implies an absence of alternative life projects beyond than motherhood, a feminine identity without power and a disbelief in the capability of controlling ones own life. They found that a traditional gender image is much more prevalent among young girls within the popular class. There were clear differences in class-based attitude towards sexuality, being a mother, future plans, sexuality and the role in the families (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:13-15). They also found two different “models” within the popular class, which they called “*the marginalized*” and “*the integrated*”. The last group had some traits more similar to the higher social classes; they had a higher level of education, were less fatalistic and their gender image could be characterized as “*a model of transition*”; modern but still contradictory (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). This could underline the complexity within the popular class, but it might also confirm that the change in generation and culture involves the presence of a more modern gender role within the young women in the popular class (Margulis 2007; Mancini and Wang 2003). This alternative model is in conflict with the roles they have grown up with in their families and

the expectations they are facing, resulting in contradictions and diversity (Cecconi 2003:189).

1.3 Young childbearing – the field of research

A short introduction to the field of research is necessary to obtain an understanding of the topic itself, but also to place my project in relation to other investigations on the subject. I start by examining the concept before I present a brief historical overview of the development in the field within the latest decades. Literature on the subject related to my analysis will be further introduced later in the study; therefore the intention here is merely to present an overview. I will end with a short presentation of the young mothers in an Argentinean context.

1.3.1 “Teenage pregnancies” – a useful concept?

Some distinctions are important to have in mind when discussing the different aspects of “teenage pregnancies”. Both in research and by international organizations such as the UN and WHO, this concept is used to describe pregnancies happening before the age of 20 (WHO 2008; Binstock and Pantelides 2005). To further specify, a distinction is often drawn between *early teenage pregnancy*, age 10-14, and *late teenage pregnancy*, age 15- 19 (Binstock and Pantelides 2005:79). This differentiation is important for many reasons. First of all, a lot of research often registers births only within the older group, and in Argentina this is also where 96% of all teenage pregnancies occur (Binstock and Pantelides 2005:86). Secondly, the negative effects of teenage pregnancies vary substantially with age. For the younger girls, there are greater health risks involved in pregnancy and birth (Brener and Ramos 2008:21). This group often also consists of considerably more vulnerable girls and the pregnancies are more likely to be a result of violence and coercion, often from significantly older men (Brener and Ramos 2008: 21; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001).

As there are other social variables than “age” affecting their situation, there are various arguments for making further distinction within the group of “teenage pregnancies” (Adaszco 2005). Several other dimensions have a differentiating impact, such as whether the pregnancy was planned or unplanned, resources available in the family and if the girl has a

partner to support her (Binstock and Pantelides 2005:79). Some, like the American sociologist Arline Geronimus (2003:887), even find the concept itself to be useless. She argues that the concept of “teenage mother” is more a political construction than a concept useful in research. The interesting thing is not whether one had a baby before or after the age of 20, but where in the course of life, with age as a continuum, one becomes a mother (Geronimus 2003:887).

The distinction between “births” and “pregnancies” is also important to have in mind (Urresti 2003). In most cases, the numbers presented in statistics and social research is registered births. The difference between pregnancies and births are made up by abortions, and because abortion is illegal in Argentina, it is difficult to get access to the exact relation between pregnancies and births. Still, calculations estimate that almost half of all pregnancies end in an abortion (Carbajal 2007b). When discussing the use of birth control and unwanted pregnancies it is important to be aware of the fact that women in higher social classes tend to have more abortions (Gutiérrez 2003). This will not only contribute to a correct understanding of the situation, but also to create awareness about the reality of abortion in Argentina. Nonetheless, birth statistics are still useful in this context, because as from a cultural point of view, both phenomena can be indicators of related factors (Urresti 2003:241).

1.3.2 The field of research

The American sociologist Frank Furstenberg (2003) argues that in the USA, teenage pregnancies as a public health problem, worthy of investigation and state intervention, was created in the 1960s, following the socio-demographic, economic, cultural and political-ideological changes after the Second World War. He holds that this attention was not connected to an increase in fertility rates among teenagers, as that was actually declining at that time. Several simultaneous demographic trends gave this issue the appearance of an urgent and growing problem. First of all, the fertility rate among older women was declining more rapidly than the rates among women under 20. At the same time, the baby boom cohort were entering their teens, increasing the numbers of teenagers having children even though the birth rate among teens was dropping. Other factors contributed to the visibility of this issue, such as changing sexual patterns, liberalized abortions laws and increasing demands

for prolonged school (Furstenberg 1991:130). From the mid-70s, the debate got even more intense. This was related to several trends, such as concern about the growing incidence of sexual activity, high rates of abortion and public reaction to welfare costs. More than anything however, it was the declining rates of marriage among pregnant teenagers that caused widespread preoccupation (Furstenberg 1991:130).

In his revision of earlier research on the field, the Argentinean sociologist Ariel Adaszko (2005) found that research on the subject still confirmed the stereotype that early parenthood promotes poverty. The main idea is that it is not desirable to have children before the age of twenty, it's a "problem" and the state should "do something" to avoid teenage pregnancies. The field of research tended to be dominated by the "*traditional*" (Stern and Garcia 1996) or "*hegemonic*" (Adaszko 2005) view on teenage childbearing. Adaszko (2005:51) argues how these types of investigations often end with some similar conclusions and sums them up in the following manner: Adolescents are too immature to have responsible sex, and should therefore not be sexually active. Because of their age they are reluctant to use contraceptives. Not using contraception will lead to unwanted pregnancies, complications related to clandestine abortions and/or HIV-infections. Going through with the pregnancy has negative effects for the health and wellbeing of the children, as the young girls are incapable of taking proper care of them. There are also negative consequences for the girls themselves as their future possibilities of personal realization within education and work become severely limited. It is therefore concluded that becoming a young mother, and nothing else, is what makes women fall into poverty (Adaszko 2005:51). These severe negative effects, not only for the individuals directly involved, but for society as a whole, legitimized the notion that this was a severe social problem and should be targeted as such (Adaszko 2005; Luker 1996).

However, from the 1980s and 1990s, a new contra-hegemonic view on young motherhood evolved, taking a critical look at previous research. In USA, social researchers such as Furstenberg (1991), Luker (1996) and Geronimus (1991) started contesting the traditional view on teenage pregnancies, arguing that the attention and preoccupation given to this subject was mainly unjustified. Research on young mothers tended to be characterised by judgment, often of class, racism and religion (Adaszko 2005:49; Luker 1996:15-43). A lot of previous investigations were also affected by problems in sampling and other methodological errors, such as selective recruitment (Furstenberg 1991:131). With more use of qualitative

research, and new techniques such as longitudinal studies and comparative cases, they reached different conclusions (Geronimus 1991; Furstenberg 1991). A lot of the causal relationships taken for granted by earlier research were actually wrong or strongly misleading. The real problem was not the age itself, but the social inequality and the poverty causing this situation (Fainsod 2006; Furstenberg 1991). As Luker (1996:107-108) underlines; *“Teenage parents are not middle-class people who have become poor simply because they have had a baby; rather, they have become teenage parents because they were poor to begin with”*. Even though they still found negative effects of early motherhood, they tended to be a lot smaller than what have been previously stated (Adaszko 2005; Arai 2003; Furstenberg 1991).

In Latin-America, Stern and Garcia’s *“Towards a new approach within research on adolescent pregnancy”* (1996, my translation) re-evaluated adolescent pregnancy in Mexico. Their conclusions resembled the ones of earlier American research, and have later been confirmed by others, such as Fainsod (2006), Adaszko (2005) and Pantelides (2004) in an Argentinean context. First of all, Stern and Garcia (1996) reject the notion of an increase in teenage pregnancies. They argue this appearance is caused by the same demographic shift as Furstenberg (1991) noticed in USA in the 1960s. Secondly, they hold that when excluding the early teenage pregnancies, there is no substantial health risk compared to having children five years later (Stern and Garcia 1996:4). The health problems related to young pregnancies are a result of the lack of nutrition, poverty and the social context they are living under, not the age itself (Adaszko 2005; Pantelides 2004); *“The mortality and the mother-child mortality associated with adolescent pregnancy are more a manifestation of the social inequality and the poverty within the most unprotected groups, than a consequence of the age where the pregnancies occur”* (Stern and Garcia 1996:4, my translation). A third aspect they confront is the argument of how teenage pregnancies cause young girls to drop out of school, and thereby contributing to “the circle of poverty”. They found that in the majority of cases the girls had already dropped out when they got pregnant (Gogna 2005; Pantelides 2004; Stern and Garcia 1996:5). When the girls quit school because of pregnancy, it was rather a “throw-out”-effect than a result of dropout, caused by moral judgment from the school itself (Gogna 2005). By conclusion, *“the context of poverty and the lack of opportunities is the cause of early pregnancy and their consequences in our countries, and not the other way around”* (Stern and Garcia 1996:6, my translation).

A critical light on the dominating discourse on early motherhood implies taking a closer look at the inherent aspects of power. There are at least two aspects worth mentioning. Several, such as Fainsod (2006), Adaszko (2005) and Stern and Garcia (1996) highlight the inherent class prejudice. The ideals of the dominating class inflict on the discourse on young mothers in many aspects; when defining what “family” is, the correct sequence in a “life course” and also when defining “adolescence” or “youth”. As the popular class “fails” compared to these ideals, it has practical consequences for the later interpretation of young childbearing. Secondly, the Argentinean sociologist Paula Fainsod (2006) argues that the current discourse on teenage childbearing serves neo-liberalistic policy. The public discourse and the media are often over-exaggerating the negative consequences of teenage childbearing, and the girls are often shown as a homogenous group of victims. The family, culture and the girls themselves are often blamed for early motherhood and if accepting teenage pregnancies as a result of a “culture of poverty”, this means that the poor are to a great deal to blame for their own poverty, which effectively de-politize the problem of social exclusion (Fainsod 2006). This individualization of the responsibility is legitimized by an existing political system, dominated by neo-liberal politics that minimize public spending in health and education and focus on the individual responsibility in shaping ones own lives (Fainsod 2006).

With earlier limitations and errors in mind, the researchers arguing for the so-called contra-hegemonic view argue for greater pluralism in the research on the subject, both in focus and methodology (Adaszko 2005). This means including the voices of the participants to a larger extent, and also to include aspects earlier neglected, such as a greater variety in the experiences and consequences of early motherhood (Adaszko 2005:55-58). In many contexts, having a child can have positive consequences on the lives of those affected, giving their life a meaning and a goal to work towards, including a motivation to continue studying and getting a stable job.

Fainsod (2006) is one of those positioning herself within the critical, contra-hegemonic tradition. In her study on young mothers and education, she demonstrates how the girls’ choices are a complex result of their social background, but also how the situation is characterized by change and resistance. By showing the plurality and the complexity and being aware of how the images and notions are being created, one can also more easily accept the different realities and rationalities behind the young mothers’ decisions. As a

result, one also creates awareness of the context and the restrictions of possibilities that these girls are confronted with (Fainsod 2006).

1.3.3 Young mothers in Argentina

Worldwide, over 16 million girls between 15 and 19 years old give birth each year, representing 11% of all births (WHO 2008). The proportion of births that take place during adolescence varies from about 2% in China, 18% in Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 50% in sub-Saharan Africa (WHO 2008). The latest report from UNDP estimates that 16 % of all children in Argentina are born from a teenage girl (UNDP 2009:74). However, there are substantial geographical differences within the country (Binstock and Pantelides 2005; Brener and Ramos 2008; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:9). In 2008, within the centre of Buenos Aires, 7, 1 % of all children were born from a teenage mother (UNDP 2009). In the surrounding province, the number was twice as high, while in Chaco, a northern province, the number was 24 %, over three times as high (UNDP 2009).

In Argentina, teenage pregnancies have been the focus of a large amount of research the latest years and is considered a significant social problem (Perrotta 2007; Margulis 2007; Fainsod 2006; Gogna 2005; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). Looking at the statistics, a valid question seems to be whether the increased preoccupation is founded in an increase of young childbearing. Several do in fact hold that there have been an increase in early childbearing (UNDP 2009; Brener and Ramos 2008), by some considered to be a result of the economic and social development the latest decades (Bianco and Correa 2003). Others argue that the level of teenage mothers has not increased. Binstock and Pantelides (2005:109) find that the level of teenage pregnancies had its peak in 1980, and that in 2001 the numbers had sunk till the level of 1970. Fainsod (2006) holds that the reason behind the apparent increase is a demographic shift, similar to what happened in USA in the 1960s and 70s. While the overall fertility in Argentina has sunk, this has been reduced less for young girls than for other groups. At the same time there is also a large young cohort of young girls getting fertile, leading to an increase in the amount of children being born of a teenage mother. The conclusion will therefore be quite different if one looks at cohort, rather than the percentage of children born of a teenage mother.

What do we know about the girls who become young mothers in Argentina? First of all, similar to what we have seen in other countries (Arai 2003; Geronimus 2003; Luker 1996), young childbearing are to a great extent a phenomenon in the popular class (Checa et.al 2009; Urresti 2003; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:9). In Argentina, 80% of the girls entering early motherhood did not finish secondary school and come from poor households (Bianco and Correa 2003:20). Using statistics from the national census of 2001, Binstock and Pantelides (2005:99-106) also found clear evidence of vulnerability when looking at poverty and related aspects such as immigration, illiteracy, working conditions, health insurance and housing.

1.4 The question of research

Becoming a mother has to be seen in relation to the social and historical context, and a basic understanding of the socio-political reality is of crucial importance for understanding the choices and actions of my informants. Whether the new situation is characterized by adaption or rupture will depend on several interconnected factors, such as their initial future plans, their resources and their family and partner.

This situation raises several questions, such as; how did the pregnancy happen in the first place? How are their reactions to the pregnancy, and why? Did they have any initial future plans, and what did this consist of? What consequences did having a child have on their future expectations and dreams? Do they manage to continue in school? Is their life as pregnant girls, and young mothers, characterized by adaption or change to their earlier project? And how do the stories of my informants match earlier research and the discourse on teenage pregnancies? With all this in mind, I split my analysis into three separate parts;

1) *Stories of unplanned pregnancies.* This part will focus on the period before the birth of the child. I will take a closer look at how they got pregnant, as well as the reactions and possible alternatives to having the child. From earlier research we know that these aspects can give us useful information about their life, which will also work as a background for the other aspects of their situation.

2) *Education.* It is my impression that education was a highly valued way of obtaining social mobility and building a different future for my informants. This was especially valid for the

mothers who wanted to create a better future for their child. Education is also an interesting subject related to young childbearing. How motherhood affects their possibilities to continue their education is one of the most debated subjects within this field, as it is closely related to future projections and the long-term effects of young motherhood. As there are several practical challenges related to having a child, the resources available to the girls will to a great degree decide if continuing is an option. In this part I will take a closer look at what education meant to the girls and whether they managed to continue with their schooling.

3) *Future plans and projections.* In this part I will see how their plans for the future were often focused around working, family and having a house. Working is something they all want to do, as motherhood also involves financial responsibility for their children. In a longer perspective, working will enable them to buy a house, meaning a stable future for the family and increased independence.

These three parts will in combination contribute to understanding some of the complexity surrounding the situation of these young mothers. By splitting their stories into these three interconnected subjects; pregnancy, education and future projects, one is also facilitating the later analysis. Their expectations and plans for the future are highly class related, and this will affect their use of contraception and their motivation to possibly avoid a pregnancy. However, this is also relevant once the pregnancy is a fact, by the reactions to the news and the alternatives that are considered by the girls and her closest. Education is in many ways providing protection against young childbearing, but their chances of continuing their education is also highly affected by having a child. Another aspect of education is that this often represents a valid alternative to early motherhood, in some instances constituting a hope for social mobility and a better future, both for the girls and their parents. For the girls, the significance of education might also change as they themselves have responsibility for the future of their child. Their initial future plans would have affected their pregnancy in the first place, or their valuation and motivation to continue in education. As a mother, they now might have a different focus, where providing their children with a better future is their foremost prioritization.

All of these aspects mentioned above happen in the context of Soldati. The context of Argentina and Buenos Aires, both in the perspective of the recent crisis, but also living in a

villa, is affecting their perspectives. At the same time, limitations of class, gender and generation are not only affecting their lives on an objective level, but also subjectively, shaping their space of action and which choices that are considered possible, realistic, available and valuable.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

The next chapter will contain earlier research and theory relevant both as a background for understanding as well for my later analysis. This will follow a similar division, split between pregnancy, education and life projects. Chapter 3 will focus on methodology, the choice of method and reflections on both the quality and the ethical aspects of the project. In chapter 4 I will present a short socio economic description of Villa Soldati and give an introduction of my informants, both the sample as well as individual presentations. In chapter 5 I present my data, which is also split in three parts. The first part evolves around the pregnancies, taking a closer look at their use of contraceptions, reactions to the pregnancy and alternatives to having the baby. The next part focus on education, both the valuation and meaning education has for my informants and their parents, but also how motherhood affected their ability to continue in school. The last part will take a closer look at their future plans and projects, focused around work and motherhood. In chapter 6 I will discuss my main findings in the light of previous research and theory. Then, in the last chapter I will answer my question of research, see how they relate to previous investigations and bring my last reflections on the subject.

2. Earlier research and theory

In this chapter I will present earlier research and theory relevant for my findings. Both an introduction to the field of research as well as an introduction to the geographical context has been introduced earlier. However, as youth childbearing is a complex subject, several interconnected factors are worth presenting before taking a closer look at the data. The chapter is split into three parts; pregnancies and alternatives, education and life projects.

In the first part I take a look at different aspects related to pregnancy. Among other things this involves contraception, reactions to a youth pregnancy and aspects surrounding abortion in Argentina. This part will end with a presentation of different view on the planned youth pregnancies, which are closely connected to the previously mentioned factors and serve as a useful complementation.

In the second part the focus will be on education. In Argentina, education has traditionally been considered a way to social mobility. However, some argue that the recent high unemployment has devalued the effect of education as a way of obtaining a secure future, and subsequently reduced the motivation for schooling. For young people in the popular class there are also several other financial and cultural restrictions affecting their ability to continue in school. Another aspect is the relation between young childbearing and education. That having a child causes school desertation has been a frequently used argument against young childbearing, but has recently been criticized by those who hold that the majority of the young mothers who are not in school had already left before they got pregnant. In addition, several also argue that having a child can actually increase a girl's motivation for education.

In the last part I will take a look at different life projects. While education is an important part of the future for many of them, there are also other projects that are important to them such as family, house and work. One of the main arguments against young childbearing is how becoming a mother restricts the development of alternative life projects. However, several have pointed out that for many girls in this situation future life projects are already quite limited. In these situations motherhood might increase the motivation for other projects such as education and extra-domestic work.

2.1 Pregnancies, reactions and alternatives

The use of contraception is one of the most investigated subjects within teenage pregnancies (Adaszko 2005:33) and subsequently an extensive field of research. I will give a short introduction to the complexity of the subject while focusing on the importance of future projects. Afterwards I will show how reactions to young pregnancies are related to future expectations, before I introduce some of the factors affecting abortion in an Argentinean context. I will end with a presentation of the concept of planned pregnancies, and how some of the research related to this subject also can contribute to a deeper understanding of the previously mentioned aspects.

2.1.1 Contraception

Irregular use of contraception among young people in the popular class is common (Zamberlin 2005; Duschatzky 2004; Checa 2003; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). Gogna et.al (2005:269) found that 84% of the teenage mothers who got pregnant for the first time were not using a contraceptive method. Why do they not use contraceptives? This is obviously a very complex subject, but in this part I have chosen to focus on information and access, gender, fatalism and future projects other than motherhood. However, as we will see later, motherhood is highly valued within the popular class and several argue that within a marginalized context this “desire” to become a mother reduces the use of contraception (Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman 2009:1; Perrotta 2008). This aspect will be further looked at in the paragraph about planned pregnancies.

Information and access

In 2005, Argentina implemented The National Program for Responsible Health and Procreation¹ (Brenner and Ramos 2008:11). Among other things this guaranteed everyone the right to free help in family planning, free contraception, the right to post-abortion care and sexual education in schools (Checa 2006:13). However, the program has faced cultural and political obstacles, especially related to discrimination of women and the Catholic Church's resistance against contraceptives and sexual education in schools (Carbajal 2010; Carbajal 2009b; Checa 2006:14). Despite the efforts, restrictions on information and access to contraception are still the cause of many teenage pregnancies (Brenner and Ramos 2008; Mancini and Wang 2003:219; Gogna 2003; Gutiérrez 2003:95). There are also substantial differences within the country, varying with geography and social class (Adaszco 2005:34; Brenner and Ramos 2008:25; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:17). Lack of correct information is also a problem, resulting in myths about own infertility or misleading information about how contraception actually works or how to use it correctly (Zamberlin 2005:289; Checa 2003:198-200; Mancini and Wang 2003; Arai 2003; Pawlowicz 1996). In a national survey about teenage pregnancies Gogna (2005:270) found that while 19% of the teenage mothers did not use contraception because they thought they could not get pregnant, 11% of the lack of use was caused by lack of information or access to contraceptives. Nonetheless, these results confirm other recent investigations, also from the neighbourhoods of Soldati and Lugano, arguing that despite having information and access to contraception the adolescents do not use it (Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman 2009; Zicavo 2007; Checa in Carbajal 2005).

Gender relations

Gender roles affect the use of contraception in several ways (Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman 2009; Pantelides 2003; Stern 2002; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). Condoms, which place a lot of the control with the man, are often the preferred choice of contraception because it is cheap and accessible (Zamberlin 2003:216). The men often decide on the use of contraception in the relationship and a lot of them do not want to use protection because it reduces pleasure, or because it is "unnatural" (Zicavo 2007; Zamberlin 2005; Gutiérrez 2003;

¹ El Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Procreación Responsable (PNSSyPR):
http://www.msal.gov.ar/htm/site/salud_sexual/site/programa.asp

Margulis 2003; Checa 2003). Condoms are most likely to be used when they do not know the girl or when they consider it a risk of catching a disease, therefore in a relationship it could even be a sign of distrust (Aiscar 2005:70; Mancini and Wang 2003:232; Zamberlin 2003:220; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:18). However, as the relationship progresses, contraception is often considered the girl's responsibility, which might result in a transition from condoms to birth control or injections (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:18). These types of contraception are often safer, give the girls more control of their own body and constitutes a break with the feminine stereotype, but also require a more liberal attitude and the ability to plan ahead (Margulis 2003: 39,214).

Gender roles also affect the use of contraception in other ways. Geldstein and Pantelides (2001:19) found a clear connection between gender images and the use of contraception. The girls with traditional gender images were less likely to use contraception. They argue that gendered expectations regarding sexuality and power would make them less able to negotiate with their partner about contraception (Checa et.al 2009; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). This is also what the American sociologist Kristin Luker holds, saying that, *"In short, the skills a young women needs in order to use contraception effectively are precisely the skills that society discourages in "nice girls" who are expected to be passive, modest, shy, sexually inexperienced (or at least less experienced than their partners), and dedicated to the comfort of others"* (Luker 1996:148).

Fatalism and "the logic of now"

Several argue that the scarcity of everyday life in the popular class makes it impossible to plan the future and therefore force the people into an immediate way of thinking (Margulis 2007; Duschatzky 2004; Cecconi 2003:196; Pawlowicz 1996:52; Fernández 1993:269). This *"logic of now"* makes it harder to plan in long-term perspectives, a vital aspect to the use of contraception (Cecconi 2003:196; Fernández 1993). Several argue that this way of thinking might be especially active within the young generation which lives in the moment and prefers intensity over planning. These sort of attitudes effect their use of contraception (Margulis 2007; Furstenberg 1991; Duschatzky 2004)

Another consequence of living in marginality is the development of *fatalism*, a feeling of lack of control of your own life, and therefore an acceptance of faith and destiny (Greco 2005). In their work, Geldstein and Pantelides (2001:16) found that, compared to the middle

class, a fatalistic view on life was twice as normal within young girls from the popular class. This can effect the use of contraception in several ways. A certain mistrust in the ability to control ones body will effect ones behaviour related to health, fertility and contraception (Climent 2009a; Zicavo 2007; Margulis 2006; Aiscar 2005; Pantelides 2003; Margulis 2003).

As a result of both “the logic of now” and fatalism, in the popular class, pregnancies and children are often considered something natural, something that come, expected or unexpected, planned or not planned, it is not something one can/will/should control (Margulis 2007; Zicavo 2007; Aiscar 2005; Greco 2005; Zamberlin 2005:287). Aiscar (2005), who did 50 in-depth interviews with women from the popular class, only found one case where the pregnancy was planned, arguing that, *“Rather than “unwanted” children, in the poor sectors a more accurate description would be “unexpected” children. This is related to the everyday life where they live their lives. The food, the housing, the clothing; everything belongs to the unpredictable and does not leave any room for future planning”* (Aiscar 2005:19, my translation).

Lack of reason not to get pregnant

A lot of the literature on the subject, both from Argentina and other countries, has reached the conclusion that the majority of the girls only use protection if they have a reason not to get pregnant (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Arai 2003; Furstenberg 2003; Margulis 2003; Stern 2002; Luker 1996). Lisa Arai (2003), a British sociologist, calls this the “*low expectations*” explanation for teenage pregnancies. This particularly affects young people who do not do well at school, or who do not have good job prospects and therefore do not see any reason not to get pregnant (Arai 2003:200). For Frank Furstenberg (1991), who has spent more than 40 years looking at early childbearing in the USA, it is likely that;

Withouth a strong belief that means of mobility are available, teens in disadvantaged communities are likely to display indifferent efforts to prevent pregnancy from occurring.[...]Without providing teenagers, females and males alike, a stronger reason to postpone parenthood, many will fail to use birth control even when it is freely available (Furstenberg 1991:136).

In Argentina, Geldstein and Pantelides (2001:15) found that the future projects among young girls in the popular class, were either non-existent or focused on “having a family”. In the middle- and high class however, “study” or “have a profession” were the future aspirations.

They argue that having a project for self-realization that involves education and work, rather than being centred on marriage and motherhood, strongly affects the use of contraception. Higher education or a profession are projects and a way of life that is necessary to protect through avoiding a pregnancy (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001: 39). This was also the conclusion that Zicavo (2007) drew from a previous investigation in Soldati. The main reason why girls got pregnant was that they did not have any reason *not* to get pregnant, as the girls who had future projects used contraception.

2.1.2 Reactions to youth pregnancies

Several have found that the fear and preoccupation that the young people have when they find out about their pregnancy tend to be centred around their parents' reactions rather than the effects a child might have on their life (Checa et.al 2009; Zamberlin 2005:296; Pawlowich 1996). In the popular class, some argue that the reactions to an early pregnancy generally tend to be positive and accepting (Zicavo 2007; Margulis 2007; Pawlowich 1996). Others however, have found that both the girls and their parents had very different positions, from immediate acceptance of the pregnancy to violent confrontations (Zamberlin 2005:297; Checa, Erbaro and Schvartzman 2009:13; Climent 2009a:8; Perrotta in Clarin 2007). However, reactions tend to be more accepting and positive during the pregnancy, and the parents have often accepted the situation before the arrival of the grandchild (Zamberlin 2005:302; Furstenberg 1991:134).

As Stern (2002) comments, in many populations having a child after secondary school is normal and expected, and maybe also considered the right time to have child. Therefore, an "early" pregnancy is one that happens while the mother is in school. The main conclusion to be drawn on earlier research on reactions to early childbearing is that the differences in reactions and consideration of alternatives seem to vary with the social conditions and the level of education (Aguero 2004:299; Gutiérrez 2003:92). This might be because of different evaluations of how early childbearing will impair the girls chances of achieving other projects such as marriage, education and economic security in later life (Furstenberg 1991:134).

“Among highly disadvantaged populations where the benefits of postponement are less obvious, negative reactions to early parenthood are likely to be more muted than in less disadvantaged groups where parenthood is viewed as a serious impediment to economic and marital success” (Furstenberg 1991:134).

2.1.3 Abortion

The alternative to going through with a pregnancy is having an abortion. For over two decades, unsafe abortions and their consequences have been the leading cause of death for Argentinean women in reproductive age, hitting the young and poor ones the hardest (Bianco and Correa 2003:21). Abortion is illegal in Argentina, but the existing law on abortion allows two exceptions; if the woman's life is in danger or if the pregnancy is a result of a rape of a mentally handicapped girl². Normally, the law is often interpreted in the most conservative way, forcing even the ones who should be protected by law to attend private health clinics, or use insecure facilities where they are risking their lives (Bianco and Correa 2003:22). Despite the risk implied in having an abortion, official statistics estimate that around 500 000 abortions are being performed each year (Carbajal 2007b). Based on these numbers, each woman in Argentina has an average of two abortions per life, which is almost one abortion for each registered birth (Carbajal 2007b).

In addition to the risk related to breaking the law, there are also strong cultural limitations affecting the use of abortion which tend to be stronger in the popular class (Arai 2003:207; Bianco and Correa 2003:22; Gutiérrez 2003:93-94; Pawlowicz 1996:46-48). Abortion is often considered something negative and shameful, and the pregnancy is considered the price to pay for the pleasure (Checa et.al 2003; Gutiérrez 2003; Mancini and Wang 2003:237). The preferred option is to *hacerse cargo*, to take responsibility for your own actions and mistakes and accept the situation (Fainsod 2006; Aiscar 2005:49; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Pawlowich 1996). In some cases there is also a certain resignation towards a non-wanted pregnancy that some argue is related to the same fatalism that affects the inconsistent use of contraception; it happened, and there is nothing one can do about it (Arai 2003:207; Margulis 2003:207).

² Codigo Penal Argentina (the Argentinean Penal Law): <http://www.infoleg.gov.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/15000-19999/16546/texact.htm#15>

So what characterizes the girls who have abortions? From the American sociologist Kristin Lukers (1996) point of view, the girls who have abortions are the ones who have something to loose, *“When it comes to abortion, the most successful girls tend to have more abortions. Abortion depends on class, race and socioeconomic background. Even those who are better off amongst the most disadvantaged tend to have more abortions”* (Luker 1996:154). Some argue that there are more abortions in the higher classes; not only will better economic resources make the operation safer, but it is also more accepted (Bianco and Correa 2003:22; Checa 2003:202-203). Greco (2005) also argues that the girls admitting to not wanting to have the baby or considering having an abortion are more open to other alternative discourses breaking with the social myth of natural maternity, and therefore have more cultural capital.

2.1.4 Planned pregnancies?

How often parenthood is intended is one of the most hotly debated issues surrounding teenage childbearing (Furstenberg 1991:133). In Argentina, research has found that around 30-44 % of teenage pregnancies are planned (Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman 2009:16; Perrotta 2008; Gogna, Fernández and Zamberlin 2005). There seemed to be more planned pregnancies among older girls (18-19 years old), those living with their partner and those who were not studying (Gogna 2005:323). Some also argue that the girls who plan their pregnancy are often especially vulnerable, and have gone through particular situations leaving them with a feeling of loneliness, such as the loss of someone near or loss of a previous pregnancy (Zamberlin 2005:286).

Several argue that the majority of teenage pregnancies can not be characterized as planned, nor as un-planned (Edin and Kefalas 2005:7; Luker 1996). It is also difficult to differentiate between concepts like unplanned, unexpected and unwanted pregnancies (Adaszco 2005:34), and this is apparent in the various and often conflicting results. While some researchers ask the girls themselves to define their pregnancy, there are also investigations where girls who do not use contraception despite having information and access are considered to have *“planned”* or *“wanted”* their pregnancies (Furstenberg 1991:131). Koenig et.al (2006) suggests that many investigations are overestimating the number of planned pregnancies. As there is a tendency to ask retrospectively, the girls have adjusted to their new realities and

tend to after-rationalize their own situation. This is often combined with reluctance to admitting to others that the baby was not planned, or reasoning that “wanted” is the same as “planned” (Koenig 2006). On the other hand, the Argentinean psychologist Gabriela Perrotta (2007) argues that even a non-planned pregnancy could still be wanted or desired, either consciously or subconsciously, stating that “*a non-planned pregnancy cannot be defined as desired or not desired just on the basis of not being consciously wanted. The desire to become a mother is also conditioned of the social representations and the gender stereotypes that define femininity*” (Perrotta 2007:8, my translation).

In an American context, researchers as Burton (1997) and Geronimus (2003) have suggested that in restricted socioeconomic circumstances, teenage childbearing can be an adaptive strategy. In a difficult environment, individuals tend to mature early and demographic events are compressed into shorter time spans, resulting in an *accelerated life course* (Burton 1997). At the same time, what constitutes a rational decision varies with your socioeconomic facilities and possibilities. In this type of context where life expectancy is low and exposure to risk is high, having a child at an early age could increase the chances of having grandparents and partner supporting you (Geronimus 2003; Burton 1997). Arai (2003) agrees with them, arguing that working class women who become mothers in their adolescence can re-enter education and the workplace at a later age when they are free from the responsibilities of childcare. As the society is confronted with the working class organisation of life course, the resulting intentions of postponing early motherhood is caused by lack of understanding and imagination, as as “*a compassionate society would facilitate this sequence of events not condemn it*” (Arai 2003:213).

Both internationally and in Argentina, several argue against the concept of “planned” youth pregnancies (Fainsod 2006; Furstenberg 2003; Fernández 1993). The Argentinean philosopher Ana Maria Fernández (1994:269) argues that Perrottas argument of the natural and all-inherent desire for motherhood contributes to enforcing the “myth of motherhood”. Fainsod³ agrees, warning that this “psycologization” of the subject could lead to a conception that an “unwanted pregnancy” never really exists, as all pregnancies are founded in a conscious or non conscious “desire” to become a mother. She strongly oppose the concept of

³ Conversation with Paula Fainsod, October 2008.

planned teenage pregnancies, arguing how the majority of teenage girls generally find their newly discovered pregnancy to be a negative experience, that forces them to change their life, whether they want to or not. Once pregnant however, there is a general will to go through with it, both because of the various problems related to an abortion, but also because there is a certain will to take responsibility for one's own actions. This seems to match what Frank Furstenberg (1991) has found in USA. After 40 years of research on young childbearing his opinion is that teens rarely deliberately choose or decide to become pregnant (Furstenberg 1991:134). He argues that many drift into parenthood as an unintended result of having sex, because there are difficulties related to the use of contraception and they find the option of abortion too hard. The favourable aspects of young motherhood in some marginalized contexts contribute to why *“teens who might have wished not to get pregnant when they did, do not necessarily regard early parenthood as an unmitigated disaster”* (Furstenberg 1991:134). However, the majority of young mothers would have preferred to postpone childbearing, and he sees these different strategies as merely a way of coping with a new situation, not an initial motivation for pregnancy; *“That teens derive some benefits from parenthood, then, does not mean that early childbearing is the result of rational choice”* (Furstenberg 1991:134).

2.2 Education

In this part I will first take a look at different aspects affecting the attitude towards education in the popular class in Argentina today. I will then introduce some elements in the debate on how motherhood affects young girls' education, where one important aspect is how having a child can actually increase the girls' motivation to continue in school. I will end by presenting some of the ways where the Argentinean educational system has adapted to better include young mothers in the school system.

2.2.1 Education in the popular class

There are substantial class differences with regard to the participation in education in Argentina. More than 80% of the ones who leave secondary school belong to the poorest households (Carbajal 2009a). Not only do young people from the popular class drop out earlier, but they also tend to repeat more classes (Bonfiglio et.al 2007). Several have argued

that the school in the popular class is a place of contradictions; while it represents aspirations of a better place in the formal labour market, at the same time there is a cultural tension with dispositions, likes, preferences and family routines (Fainsod 2006; Climent 2002).

Education is a complex issue where the decision and possibility of maintaining the project of education are affected by several factors, such as expectations of a better future, gender images, experiences of educational failure and more than anything, economical difficulties (Climent 2003:90). Even though the public schools are free, there are still costs involved such as transportation, books and utensils. At the same time, in some cases the children's need for schooling must be compared to the financial contribution they can make to the household. The children might have to work themselves, and the girls are often the ones who have to stay at home and watch their siblings allowing the mother to work herself and provide for the family, constituting a strategy of survival (Cafiero 2007; Climent 2003:83).

The context of marginalization also imposes other restrictions; the daily uncertainty, a feeling of not having control and the low self esteem are some of the factors contributing to a problematic relation with the school system (Climent 2003:82). This context can also force them to prioritize the immediate needs over long term planning, which also makes it difficult to invest in schooling (Cecconi 2003). Growing up in a social context where leaving school is normal also makes it difficult for the children to imagine that they are capable of studying, and this lack of confidence leads a lot of young people to abandon school. One wants to but cannot; and one only tries what one sees as possible, confirming the "circular presentation" (Climent 2002:10). There are also challenges related to the school itself; many schools in marginalized areas suffer from lack of resources, both in staff and material conditions. In some instances the students are also confronted with a different culture, and there are also incidents of discrimination on the basis of where they live, for example "*villeros*", or ethnicity (Cafiero 2007). The "educational inequality" we see in today's Argentina, with drop-outs and delays in their school trajectories, is therefore not only caused by the poverty in the households, but of a combination of different factors of inequality (Cafiero 2007:216).

For girls, their schooling can also be affected by expectations related to traditional gender roles and motherhood. The Argentinean sociologist Graciela Climent found that the mothers of teenage mothers wanted them to have education and work, as this was valued as a way of

obtaining a better job, a better future, progression and independence (Climent 2002). The project of education constitutes a hope of progression, but sometimes is not considered possible. At the same time, this also coexists with another privileged project; motherhood (Climent 2002:10). Even if they had education, women were still expected to do the duties that traditionally are assigned them, and their mothers also wanted them to have children and get married (Climent 2002:7). These aspects make it hard to visualize education as a project to develop, even though studying as a life project is valued by both the daughters and their mothers.

Several also argue that the current situation in Argentina has affected the view on education. Education has traditionally been a way of obtaining social mobility, and for the first immigrants, formal education and titles were perceived as the key to obtain this (Margulis 2007:27). As unemployment increased it got harder for everyone to get a job, and as a result, while the costs of schooling might be high, the rewards are very uncertain (Climent 2003:83, 2002:11). Several argue that while secondary school is still attended, it is without conviction and motivation, as there is a reduced belief in the positive affects of education and its ability to represent a better future (Zicavo 2007:165; Gogna 2005:269; Cecconi 2003:184). Observing the current situation, Cecconi (2003:184) even argues that parents who want their children to study seem to represent a “*social mutation*”, and a “*passage of aspirations*”. As a result of the historical conjuncture, education is no longer useful to obtain social mobility, but a necessity for the social reproduction of the same class.

Despite the situation, the school is still valued for several reasons, visible in the efforts and lengths many parents go to to make sure their children can attend school. Cafiero (2007) is one of those who argue that as a result of the crisis in unemployment, education might even be more valued, “*Work and the school are still seen as two indispensable means of social integration. Access to school [...] is a way of making sure that their children find a job, in a context characterized by unemployment and precarious jobs*” (Cafiero 2007:217, my translation). In many cases, the valuation of education is based in their own deprivation, and represents a hope of a better future and social mobility for their children (Cafiero 2007; Climent 2001:10; Geldstein 1994); “*an element of differentiation between the generations, between the history of the parents and the present, and the future life of their children*” (Cafiero 2007:217, my translation).

In marginalized areas, the school can also contribute to a strategy of survival, as they can give the children daily meals, which are greatly appreciated (Cafiero 2007). The school can be valued because it represents a frontier and a contrast to the neighbourhood itself. Compared to the streets, it is a safe place for the children to be, and it also includes a different socialization (Cafiero 2007). School can also be valued for constructing an identity and a project with social recognition, a function related to integration and socialization, as a facilitator for social mobility, a place of “distinction” and a place of knowledge, still closely related to the formation of abilities that create a legitimate social capital. Education is a way of becoming someone valuable, “to be someone” (Cafiero 2007:209; Climent 2003:89).

2.2.2 Early motherhood and school desertion

Young motherhood and education is an important and well investigated subject for many reasons. As we have seen earlier, keeping girls in school might increase their use of contraception and postpone motherhood (Fainsod 2006; Gogna 2005; Bianco and Correa 2003:16; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001:11). Geldstein and Pantelides (2001) argue that regular school attendance, and especially secondary school, is not only useful to provide sexual education, but especially underline its role in increasing *“the cultural, cognitive and relational resources that are indispensable for the adolescent to make her own decisions”* (2001:11, my translation). Through school attendance, girls are exposed to other cultures and learn other skills, which can lead to increased self-esteem, a more modern gender image as well as the elaboration of alternative future projects (Fainsod 2007; Aiscar 2005:16; Climent 2002:2).

A different issue is how having a child affects the girls’ education. The classic argument is that motherhood makes young girls drop out of school which negatively affects the development of alternative life projects and leads them into a circle of poverty. On the contrary, many argue that the majority of young mothers are already excluded by the school system prior to their pregnancy (Fainsod 2006; Gogna 2005; Pawlowicz 1996:25). Guzman argues that this indicates that *“both phenomenon are caused by the same original factor; the social exclusion that gives the youth in the popular sectors a greater vulnerability”* (Guzman 2000 in Gogna et.al 2005:267, my translation).

Using national statistics from 2004, Mónica Gogna, Silvia Fernández and Nina Zamberlin (2005) found 44% of the young mothers in Argentina had already left school before they got pregnant. For over half of them leaving school was caused by lack of motivation to study further or finding it difficult (Gogna et.al 2005:267). However, other reasons such as economic problems, taking care of family and problems with access were also mentioned. For many girls, leaving school results in increased exclusion, vulnerability and marginality, as they reduce their lives to domestic chores and routine work that is socially devalued and invisible (Climent 2003:88). In cases where they have also been excluded from working outside the house, Pawlowicz (1996:25) argues that, excluded from production, they are only left with access to reproduction. In this situation, she questions to which point young girls can postpone maternity over other type of projects like work or study. This also seems to be the conclusion of Gogna, concluding that, *“in the context of poverty where present and future expectations are restricted, motherhood has a meaning for the adolescent girls that it might not have had in more favourable circumstances”* (Gogna et.al 2005:268).

For those who were still in school when they got pregnant, Gogna et.al (2005:268) found that almost 60% of them left before the seventh month of pregnancy. Shame and fear of discrimination played an important part, although this was substantially lower in Buenos Aires (16%), than in the country in general (28%). Other reasons were the need for relaxing, other health issues and financial problems (Gogna et.al 2005:269). For the girls who had had more than one child, three out of four did not continue their education after the birth of their first child. While almost half of them said that they preferred taking care of their family, some also said that they did not want to study anymore, or that financial aspects made it too difficult (Gogna et.al 2005:269). They also found higher economic activity among the young mothers, although it is uncertain to whether economic restrictions caused them to quit their education or whether the responsibility of motherhood increases the need for working (Gogna et.al 2005). Still, there might be other indications that the girls who drop out of the school system are already more vulnerable than the ones who manages to stay. Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman (2009:8) found that those who fell out of the educational system after a pregnancy often had a history of repeating schoolyears, or had even decided earlier that they wanted to leave because they lacked motivation.

For the young mothers who manage to stay in school, the family seems to be an important resource. Living with their family constitutes a fundamental support for the young couple to

handle their new roles, continue in school, work or have free time (Zamberlin 2005:303). This might increase their dependenc on their family and limit the development of the couple's relationship, but leaving would significantly reduce their chances of continuing or retaking their studies (Zamberlin 2005:308). Their ability to continue is also closely related to their family's valuation and experiences with schooling. The parents' attitude towards education is very important, and there is a clear distinction between the girls coming from a home where education had a positive value and the families where it was considered to be an unnecessary or superficial value (Zicavo 2007:165). In Great Britain, Smith-Battle (2007) found that the young mothers who managed to continue in school often had families with high expectations and long-term experiences with education. In contrast to the others who dropped out, they could draw on "*intergenerational traditions of school success and the educational and vocational resources that accompany them*" (Smith-Battle 2007:357).

2.2.3 The child as incentive

Becoming a mother can change the way a girl sees her future and represents a clear shift in future plans and motivation (Margulis 2007; Smith-Battle 2007; Aiscar 2005:79; Luker 1996:182). Pawlowicz (1996) calls this "*the child as incentive*", and describes how having a child often increases young girls' motivation to participate in education or extra-domestic work. As a consequence of the ideal, self-sacrificing mother described by Fernández (1994), having a child gives an extra motivation to "*poner las pilas*", really get it together to create a future for ones child, including getting a job and taking an education (Aiscar 2005; Zamberlin 2005:309; Pawlowicz 1996).

Judging from the work of the American sociologist Smith-Battle (1995) however, this effect depends on the girls' prior plans and motivation. In her narrative study of 16 young mothers, she found that there were three different ways of handling a newfound motherhood. She called the first group "*Inheriting a diminished future*". These girls had expectations for a child to change their future, but because their initial vulnerability, the child worsened their situation. In the second group, "*Inventing a future from an impoverished past*", the new role as a mother worked as a stimuli to become more responsible and creating a new future, both for herself and for her child. Within the last group, "*Pressing into an open future*", a child represented an interruption of a future project, but because they had access to more

resources, they managed to continue with their original plans by “*weaving complex schedules together involving child care, transportation, and schooling, using family help and public resources*” (Smith Battle 1995:15).

In a later work, Smith-Battle (2007) argues that because teen mothers’ goals of becoming good mothers, students and gainful employees are so interconnected, the “turning point experience” of motherhood represents an un-used potential for promoting education, which could even reduce the effects of prior adversity (Smith-Battle 2007). However, instead of a potential positive chain reaction, young mothers often lacked the resources and support to follow their new found motivation, and therefore were likely “*to engender a sequence of negative rather than positive events, thus reinforcing their earlier disadvantage and educational underachievement*” (Smith-Battle 2007:367). This seems to resemble what Checa, Erbaro and Schvartzman (2009:7) found in a shantytown in Buenos Aires. Among the young mothers education was still valued as a way of obtaining a better future and job, and in this way providing their children with a better future. However, even though the majority wanted to continue, the new challenges and lack of available resources made it impossible.

2.2.4 Adaptions in the Argentinean school system

The gender difference in school attendance is one of the reasons why reducing teenage pregnancies is included in the United Nations Millenium Goals, as a way of increasing female participation in basic schooling (WHO 2008). Through several years the reality of adolescent pregnancy was something that the educational system in Argentina preferred ignoring (IPE 2003). The girls often had to leave school because of too much absence, or they were expelled because of the “bad example” they represented. During the last years there have been several changes and an increased willingness to include young mothers in secondary education. In 1999, the government in Buenos Aires started the implementation of the “*Project of educational retention of students who are pregnant or parents in secondary and technical schools*”⁴. The objectives of the project were multiple; while they aimed to

⁴ “Proyecto de retención escolar de alumnas/os madres/padres y embarazadas en escuelas media y técnicas”: http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/educacion/recursos/ed_sexual/programa1.php?menu_id=31270 and <http://programadealumnasmadresypadres.blogspot.com/>

capacitate the new parents to take better care of the children, another important goal was to keep the parents from falling out of school.

The program has grown substantially; in 1999 it covered 20 schools and 165 students, ten years later it was functioning in 125 schools and provided help to 1813 students (Olivia 2009). Subsequently, it has also kept a great amount of parents in school - last year 78% of the students included in the program managed to continue (Olivia 2009). The project started out by letting the mothers attend classes with their children, but has now developed other flexible adaptations, such as extended legal absence, kindergartens at the school area and time for the mothers to breastfeed (Calderón 2006). These different changes might have made a difference. Several recent investigations have found that young mothers found the schools flexible to their needs as parents (Fainsod 2006; Zamberlin 2005:309). The young mothers valued the teachers' interest in the well-being of themselves and their children, and the school was no longer considered a place of exclusion, but functioned as a place of retention (Zamberlin 2005:309).

2.3 Life projects

2.3.1 The development of a life project

The concept of life projects has been used in several studies about young mothers and future plans (Climent 2003; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001; Pawlowicz 1996). In her study of young mothers in a villa in Buenos Aires, Pawlowicz (1996) uses the concept to discuss the relationship between motherhood, education and extra-domestic work. She explains the concept in the following manner;

“The concept of life project is associated with life expectations, but while the first is the project which the subject creates based on their personal story, family myth, their subjectivity and potential; the second is based on what life conditions an individual can aspire to on the basis of economic and socio-political conditions, environment, education etc. Surely, the life project of an adolescent is associated with family and personal variables involving a lot of different aspects; anticipated project, family myth, identification with women in their family, psychological aptitudes for different tasks, interests, intellectual capacity, attitude towards change, ambitions, models, fantasy and “capacity for making decisions”” (Pawlowicz 1996:26, my translation)

As the development of a life project is so closely related to the social context, there are different opinions as to whether it is useful to talk about a “life project” for marginalized youth in today's Argentina. Some, as Duschatzky (2004), argues that the combination of post-modernism, a country in post-crisis and the marginalization of youth in the popular class does not allow for the development of a life project. Others, like Pawlowicz (1996:26) accepts that within this context, the life expectations do not leave too many possibilities for the formulation of a life project. The characteristics of immediateness, the importance of close experiences, concrete actions and the everyday life of the popular class also makes it difficult to anticipate and realize a life project outside the representations, roles and models of the woman in their family and neighbourhood (Pawlowicz 1996:25; Luker 1996:116). Especially has the influence and importance of the mother been highlighted (Checa, Erbaro and Schvartzman 2009:4; Climent 2003,2001).

In their classic work on gender images and class, Geldstein and Pantelides (2001) also found clear differences in life projects of young girls. While forming a family was the activity most frequently mentioned by the adolescent from the popular class, study or have a job that required university was the preferred option among the middle class. This seems to match other theories on early pregnancies, both regarding motivation for using contraception, but also related to theory on planned youth pregnancies. Several argue that in a context where marginalization quite effectively excludes other possibilities, maternity might seem as the only realistic life project (Pawlowicz 2004; Climent 2003; Margulis 2003; Mancini and Wang 2003). While a pregnancy for middle class girls presents a clear break from the planned life project involving education and extra-domestic work, for many working class girls becoming a mother represents an alternative life project (Bianco and Correa 2003:15; Checa 2002:202-203). Eugenia Zicavo (2007), who did a ethnographic study of young mothers in Soldati a couple of years earlier, found that because of the context of poverty and lack of alternative opportunities within education and work, for the young girls maternity was perceived as *“the most adequate strategy for a future projection, both effective and reachable as a way of personal realization: a source of small everyday satisfactions”* (Zicavo 2007:168, my translation).

2.3.2 Motherhood

The Argentinean philosopher Ana Maria Fernández (1993) argues that the “myth of the woman” defines the discourses about women. Motherhood is considered the paradigmatic function of a woman, what gives her identity and brings meaning to her life; being a mother is the essence of a woman. Two of the factors contributing to this social myth are “*the illusion of naturality*” and “*the illusion of atemporality*” (Fernández 1993:168-176). When arguments are based in naturality (body and reproduction) and a-temporality (instincts, traditions and history) it contributes to the impression that “*it has always been and will always be like this, unchangeable, universal and ever lasting, despite historical and cultural changes*” (Greco 2005:41, my translation).

Accepting that a woman equals a mother has several consequences. When motherhood is presented as natural, universal and predestined, it also effectively excludes other competing stories and inhibits the articulation of desires, dreams and positions that would suggest otherwise (Fernández 1993:181). On an individual level, this also affects the value that a woman puts on herself and others, as well as the valuation of her project as a mother compared to other projects (Fernández 1993:162-164). The incorporation of the myth of motherhood is also a form of symbolic violence (Fernández 1993); through a naturalization and legitimization of discourses and institutions it works as a social domination that is not perceived by the dominated. The dominating social discourses continue to present the woman as she is and should be; first of all, both by essence and nature, a mother; unselfish, submissive and unconditional (Greco 2005:42). The “legitimate motherhood” within the popular class is characterized by the “unconditional mother”, the mother who sacrifices herself for her children (Wang 1996). This also means living a “life for others”, that is, not for their own sake, but for everyone else around them, especially their family (Ponce 2006; Aiscar 2005; Greco 2005). As mentioned, the Argentinean popular class is extremely complex, and Marcús (2006) therefore suggests talking about motherhoods in plural.

Adriana Greco (2005), who has researched motherhood in the Argentinean popular class, underlines how the social domination varies both with the historical and social context and does not have the same prevalence in all social classes;

In the most impoverished sectors the impacts of the myth of maternity are stronger and more persistent, combined with the factors of poverty and marginality that weakens the self esteem and the personal autonomy, not only because of the absence or shortage of income, but fundamentally because of the strong restriction or lack of access to those cultural goods that would allow these women to escape the circles of discrimination, postponement and subordination. (Greco 2005:43, my translation).

One of the consequences of this myth of maternity is that in a situation where alternative options are limited, motherhood is seen as the most valid and preferable option.

It is likely that with few or no options of protagonism in the public space, they “choose” to continue on the track – generational and culturally inflicted – of maternity; this will guarantee them at least elusively a certain social recognition, through the investiture granted by the woman=mother myth when it comes to feminine realization, even though it might not be outside the private home (Greco 2005:43).

The strong social recognition of the mother is confirmed by Mancini and Wang (2003:236), who found that in the popular class, maternity is valued as the main life project and the symbol of the feminine identity. The children become the main factor that defines ones identity, and the role of a mother gives compensations and rewards that they do not find in other areas of their lives (Cecconi 2003:194; Mancini and Wang 2003:236). The women in the popular sectors tend to organize their lives around the role as a mother. The children are valued as “objects” that are possible to achieve and one can decide over. It’s something positive that gives a lot of prestige and social power.

For many young girls growing up in a marginalized context there are a lot of positive aspects connected with becoming a mother (Perrotta 2008; Margulis 2003). Becoming a mother can be a way of gaining autonomy and independence. It’s an excuse to move out and start their own family, this way escaping the control of the family (Pantelides 2004). In a context of material restraints, having a baby will also mean finally having something of ones own (Carbajal 2004; Cecconi 2003:194). The Spanish psychologist, Luciana Peker (2007) argue that in today’s consumer society one is not considered being someone before one has something, which makes being a mother and having a baby a necessary confirmation of ones own subjectivity. Many young people today are both excluded from school and work, and life is lived as continuity without breaks or ruptures (Margulis 2007). In this context being a mother represents a clear break, an incentive to plan ahead and something to measure time upon (Zicavo 2007).

2.3.3 Women in extra-domestic work

During the 1980s and 1990s, following the worsening of labour conditions in Argentina, female participation in the work force increased (Geldstein 1994). While earlier, working women had been women from the middle-class working part time, this change was characterized by women from the popular class who had to take precarious jobs to support the survival of the family as the male unemployment increased.

Geldstein (1994) found that women who worked were faced with *la doble carga*, a double weight, as they still had to take care of the house. Several year later, Aiscar (2005:18) holds that neither the increase in female work or the unemployment within the “heads of the family” have changed the differentiation between the public and the private. The predominant idea is that “the man knows” of the extra-domestic world, while “the woman knows” of the reproduction of the everyday life. At the same time, if women work, it is solely a prolongation of the same role; motherhood, upbringing and school are still considered to be the tasks of the woman. In some instances there is also a conflict between motherhood and working, where women could be blamed for working because this implies neglecting the care of the children. However, if the man cannot take his role as the financial provider, there is an increased accept for the necessity of women working because they are expected to contribute to the subsistence of the group (Aiscar 2005:41).

There can be several motivations behind the decision to work. Pawlowicz (1996) holds that more than finding identity and recognition in a job, working could be seen as part of the family project, and that ultimately everything is done for the children. Other projects are only intermediate projects who in the last means are aiming for improving the conditions for the children. Studying will be way of increasing the chances of getting a better job. A stable, better paid job will provide money, either to buy an own house or to directly provide for the child (Pawlowicz 1996:29). Working would mean being able to buy a house, that again would mean security and a better future for her children. Buying a house meant stability, both for themselves and their children, having something of ones own and this way also gaining independence from their parents (Pawlowicz 1996). However, even though also Geldstein (1994) found that the womens biggest motivation was to give their children a better life than they had, without hunger or material restrictions, working was also valued in other ways. For the women who worked, it was a way of becoming someone, and a way of

becoming independent, progressing and being able to manage their own lives. This was also transferred into their relationship with their partner in the household, giving them more independence, self-confidence and authority (Geldstein 1994:103).

In a recent investigation, Zamberlin (2005:315) found that after the birth, the young parents would normally settle for a more traditional gender pattern, where the man would provide economically for the family while the woman took care of the house and the child. However, as mentioned earlier, young men with little work experience and education have a hard time meeting these expectations, especially facing the current high unemployment. She argues that this could be one of the reasons why young men often choose to “escape” paternity. As a solution she underlines the need for more modern gender roles where also the girls is able to project other projects than maternity, also leaving space for the boy to create other ways to be a father (Zamberlin 2005:315).

3. Methodology

To present and discuss openly ones methodological decisions as well as the procedures in the analysis is an important part of validating research (Silverman 2005:209). A transparent research process enables the readers to reflect on the decisions made during the research process as well as how this affected the data achieved. In this chapter I will clarify the background of my research, how I got access to my data and the process of analysis. Ethical considerations have been an important part of the whole process, and some aspects will be more throughoutly discussed at the end of the chapter. A detailed presentation of the socio-economic composition of my sample as well as a description of each one of my informants will be presented in the following chapter.

3.1 Preconceiving young mothers in Soldati

In 2006, I spent a year as an exchange student at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). One of the things that struck me about the city was the huge social inequalities, which made a strong impact on me. One month after I arrived I started working in a shantytown close to the centre called Villa Soldati. By helping the children with their schoolwork I learned a lot about everyday life in this part of town, but I also got to know people who lived and worked in the neighbourhood, making friends I still keep in touch with. At the same time my classes at the university helped me put my experiences into a social and historical context. Not only did I learn about the development of the villas and the increased spatial segregation happening in Buenos Aires, but we also discussed aspects like the privatization of the public health system in the 90s as well as sexual and reproductive rights in Argentina.

Back in Norway, I kept reading about all of these subjects. Although I started out with the issue of clandestine abortions, I quickly found myself interested in the subject of planned teenage pregnancies. As I was 24 years old at the time, and still did not feel ready to become a mother, I wondered why anyone would *want* to have a baby at 16? After reading more about the issue of young motherhood in relation to aspects such as class, gender and motherhood, childbearing as a valid future project started making sense to me. However, as I was back in Argentina to start my field work, I faced some difficulties. First of all, my old

tutor at UBA, Laura Grigaitis, had put me in contact with an old friend of her, Paula Fainsod. She happened to be an expert on young mothers and education and after more than ten years working with this issue she was sceptical to the concept of “planned teenage pregnancies”. She argued that the majority of girls found themselves with an unplanned pregnancy which they, faced with the alternative of abortion, reluctantly accepted. Secondly, after talking to my friends in Soldati, they did not know of any girls who had planned their pregnancy, making it rather complicated finding informants.

As a consequence I realized the best would be to change the focus of research. I was still interested in the issue of young childbearing, especially in the context of poverty. After spending some time in Soldati, as well as reading about the subject, there were many aspects I wanted to understand, such as; How did they end up pregnant? What were the reactions, both from themselves and the people around them? What were the consequences of having the child?

3.2 Obtaining data

3.2.1 Complementary methods

I have based the thesis on three complementary sources of data. Even though my main source of information is interviews, I also did a small amount of fieldwork and did an extensive revision of existing literature on the field, especially from Argentina. During the field work I was in Soldati on a regular basis, this time working with children which I also helped with schoolwork. However, maybe my biggest source of information and understanding was getting to know Meche and Berta, two girls at the same age as my informants. This also helped me as I got to know their everyday life, their dreams and aspirations, but also how their everyday life was shaped by living in Soldati. Different parts of stories told a lot, and this impacted me a great deal; such as how everyday violence restricted time schedules, reflections on future and family histories of immigration.

I also did extensive reading of relevant literature. This involved newspaper articles, reports from different organizations working on human rights and womens rights, but also earlier research projects. As I wanted to understand the context, especially important because I was

doing research in a different culture, I also extended my reading to related subjects such as gender, class and marginalization.

3.2.2 Why interviews as a method?

The research question always has to decide the method, but it also depends on ones theoretical background and interest, the data and the people who will be reading the results (Thagaard 2003; Widerberg 2001:119). I wanted to find out how young mothers in Soldati understood their own situation; therefore, I considered qualitative interviews to give me the best data. This would give me information about how the informants understand experiences and happenings in their lives, as well as their thoughts and feelings (Thagaard 2003:83). The flexibility in qualitative methods would make it easier to get a hold of the complexity within the subject and discover new aspects (Thagaard 2003). This might be particularly interesting and important within the subject of teenage pregnancies, as there has been a call for methods that include the voices and perspectives of the participants (Adazco 2005; Arai 2003).

To make the data valid and transferable one has to have a clear idea on what you can say something about, and how one can do this (Widerberg 2001). Thus, it is important to consider what type of data is obtained through a qualitative interview. Information can never be completely objective, as the researcher is always part of the research. Qualitative research is aiming to understand a phenomenon, not (just) explaining it. Aiming to understand a phenomenon subjectivity is a tool or a resource within the interviews, both to obtain trust and responses in the interviews. Interview data are descriptions of happenings in the informant's life, but also reflections on how the informant understands her own experiences and how the informants experience the researcher (Thagaard 2003:83). I also find it useful to implement the views of Nilsen and Gullestad (in Thagaard 2003), as they underline the importance of taking the life situation and the structural relations into consideration when analysing what the informant is saying.

3.2.3 Access to the field

I wanted to interview young mothers in the popular class. Since Soldati had the socio-economic characteristics I was looking for and I already had contacts in the area, I considered this to be a good choice. The best way to obtain informants can often be the easiest way, if

one is capable of maintaining the ethical aspects (Silverman 2005). I therefore asked Valeria Gracia, one of the coordinators of an organization⁵ working in the area, if she knew how I could get in contact with possible informants. At that time, she had known me for over two years and had already offered her help as she knew about my project. She quickly introduced me to two young girls who she thought would be able to help me. I presented the project to them, told them what kind of girls I would like to interview and how I was planning on doing it. To get access to a field, it is important that the gatekeepers trust both the researcher and her motives (Wærdahl 2010:237). In my case, the people working in this NGO had known me for several years, and the two girls had also spent a lot of time with me and had learned to know and trust me as a person.

To make sure my key contacts did not put pressure on any girls I let them know that it wasn't a problem if they did not find as many informants as I initially had requested, and repeatedly highlighted the voluntary aspect of the participation. I gave them a short written presentation of the project that they could give to girls who may be interested. In this letter it was clearly stated that the participation was completely voluntarily, that they would remain anonymous, and it also gave my contact information in case they had any questions beforehand. The two key contacts ended up helping me out a lot. To get informants they started asking girls in their school, in their neighbourhood and among relatives. They also assisted me in other parts of the process, such as arranging when and where we could meet and often followed me to the place of the interview, as it sometimes could have been complicated walking around the villa alone. By participating in activities and getting to know people living in the area, I managed to get information I would not have otherwise obtained.

3.2.4 The sample

It is important to have a sample that is theoretically grounded (Silverman 2005). Based on experience and literature I had developed some criterias for inclusion. I considered their age

⁵ The organisation is called "Voluntario Global" or Global Volunteer, and is mainly working as a provider of volunteers, the majority foreigners, who are able to contribute with different capabilities such as teaching English or computer at different community centres in Buenos Aires, both in the capital and in the province. See also www.voluntarioglobal.ar.com

and socioeconomic background to be most important. Arguing that living in a Soldati would imply a certain similarity; getting informants from the same neighbourhood would give me a sample within the same socio economic strata (Margulis 2007). This seemed to be a valid assumption taking into consideration a certain complexity based on the informants' recent immigration from different countries and backgrounds. Another factor was that even though the majority of the girls had lived in Soldati all their lives, a couple of them had either recently moved away or just moved there.

What other characteristics did my informants have? As I had to adapt to what type of informants I had access to, my final selection ended up as a *convenience sample* (Thagaard 2003). Initially I wanted to talk to girls over 18 years old; both because of ethical guidelines and an idea that they would have thought and reflected more on the subject (Aiscar 2005:23). Since my key openers were 18 at the time, this also seemed to be the easiest group to reach. Limiting the upper age limit was grounded in earlier research, based on the concept of "teenage pregnancies" targeted on girls between 15 and 19 years old. With this concept, 7 out of 9 of my informants were still teenagers when they had their first baby, the youngest one giving birth when she was 16 and the oldest ones at 20. However, one of the important aspects for me was seeing how motherhood was related to other life projects, and within this age spectrum it would still be interesting, especially for those who were still in school.

I originally wanted to interview first time mothers as I considered having their first child to create the initial great change in their life in relation to independence, education, work, their family and their partner, in addition to be assigned into a new role as a "mother". I still ended up interviewing two girls that had two kids, and in both of these cases we maintained the focus on the first child. I considered it ideal talking to mothers who had their babies 1-3 years ago. From earlier research one would think that in the really early stage the girls might still be at home with the baby, adjusting to the new situation, and maybe be either in a post-depressive birth mode, or in euphoria and joy, still not having to face the new everyday routine of having to combine having a baby with studies and/or work.

It's important to discuss what factors are affecting my sample and what effects this can have on my results (Thagaard 2003). Were these girls typical young mothers in Soldati? My selection was limited to the social circle of my key-openers who were both finishing secondary school, about to start university studies and were active in different organizations

and extra-curricular activities. All of these characteristics could imply a certain amount of social resources. Another factor I had to consider is that those who are willing to be interviewed and talk about their life situation are often the ones who are content with their situation and have more resources. A consequence of this can be a so called *sloping sample*, where we can get more information about how situations are mastered than the conflicted, problematic ones (Thagaard 2003). These aspects, combined with a specific social network, might imply that the majority of my informants probably are not amongst the most vulnerable. Facing the new situation they might have had more resources to handle the situation, and therefore having a child at this young age did not have the same consequences and implications as it would have had for other girls with less resources. These dimensions have to be kept in mind when considering my data and also when reflecting on how these results can be transferred to other social contexts.

3.2.5 Interviewing

As I did my interviews in Soldati I had to adapt and be flexible to the situation. My key contacts arranged the time and place, focusing on finding a time and a place that would be the easiest and most comfortable for the informants. I ended up doing the interviews in different places; one in the kitchen at the local community centre, three in the house of one of my contacts and the other five in the house of the informant, which also gave me a unique possibility to learn more about the informant. The interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes, as in some occasions the girls had to go to school or go home because someone was watching their children. During the interviews, I noted important key words, but I also used a tape recorder which enabled me to be fully present in the situation.

The knowledge obtained during the interview depends on the social relation between the interviewer and the interviewed, and it is important that the interviewer has the ability to create a space where the person interviewed can speak freely (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). To make sure the informants feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts about their life and their world, the situation of the interview has to be *scened* (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:141). Before the interview I was introduced to the informant by one of my contacts, which not only gave us something to talk about, but also put me in a position as someone trusted or known. I often tried to make them more comfortable by starting with innocent

small talk, complementing on the baby or giving other positive feedback. I then did a *briefing* (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:141), including going through the written presentation of the project, asking them if they had any questions and if they were okay with the tape recorder. I also did a written confirmation⁶, including all the aspects underlined by NESH⁷ (2006), such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, that they would be anonymous and that they had the right to withdraw from any question, or the whole interview, without having to give any justification or explanation.

My interviews were partly structured, following what is being characterized as *the qualitative interview of research* (Thagaard 2003:85). My interview guide⁸ was inspired by earlier research projects (Fainsod 2007; Pawlowicz 1996; Edin and Kefalas 1995) as well as comments from Laura Grigaitis. Before I started interviewing I also had the interview guide and a description of the project approved by the NSD⁹. I had divided the interview into two parts; first I tried getting a picture of the current situation, their social relations and their daily routine at school while working and taking care of the child. This was also used as a way of getting some concrete experiences (Thagaard 2003:88). In the second part I focused more on becoming a mother, changes and future projections. After the interview, I did a *debriefing* (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:142), where I asked whether they had anything to add, and how they felt about being interviewed. I also gave them all my personal contact information in case they had any additional doubts or questions after the interview.

In a partly structured interview the questions are planned but the sequence remains flexible; allowing the researcher to follow the informant's story and to be open to new aspects (Thagaard 2003:85). These aspects were important to me, as I wanted them to talk about what was important in their story and their lives. Widerberg (2001) accentuates how flexibility and adaptability in the interview is important to make the differences visible. At the same time, however, she underlines how one also has to focus on the aspects that the

⁶ Appendix 1

⁷ Den Nasjonale forskningsetiske komité for samfunnsvitenskap og Humaniora (The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities): <http://www.etikkom.no/Vart-arbeid/Hvem-er-vi/Komite-for-samfunnsvitenskap-og-humaniora/>

⁸ Appendix 2

⁹ Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelige Datatjeneste (Norwegian Social Science Data Services) <http://www.nsd.uib.no/>

informants themselves exclude to see if the differences are real. As the interviews went on, I also found myself gaining increasing insight in the issue, common in explorative interviews, but I also had to balance the interest in new subjects so I would be able to compare (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:128). An example is the importance of family background, where I found myself curious about the university background characterizing the families of Jessica and Victoria, and the obvious impact this had for their expectations and motivation for education. However, this was one of the aspects I had to let go.

I felt that most of my informants were confident in themselves and their own situation and did not feel bad about presenting “their story”. In almost all of the cases they said that they did not mind, some of them mentioned that this was “their story” and that they were “proud of it”, and that these were things they had talked about with their friends before. At the same time, in several of my interviews the informants kept an autonomous position towards the subject, a sign that they do not feel subordinated in the situation (Thagaard 2003:101). As an example; Gladys repeated several times that “a child does not stop you from doing anything”, which is a reference to her own experience, but could also be interpreted as a correction or negation of the stories of the stereotypical view of young mothers.

3.3 My role in the research

The researcher is always part of the research. The role as a researcher and the relation to the subject of research needs to be made visible, problematized and explored to obtain research of high quality and a level of knowledge (Widerberg 2001:28). My relationship with my informants was also of crucial importance to the kind of data I would get (Thagaard 2003:97). To establish a situation characterized by trust it is important not to create distance to the informants as this could make the informant sceptical to what the researcher represents (Thagaard 2003:98). Age, gender, ethnicity, social class and nationality are all important factors that can affect the interview situation and my social distance to my informants (Thagaard 2003:98). I’m a relatively young, well-educated, white woman from Norway. How was this affecting my relationship with my informants?

Coming from a different culture could be positive in the sense that one can study aspects in a more distanced perspective (Thagaard 2003:75). On the other hand, being connected to the

culture of study is crucial for the understanding of the phenomenon (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Another aspect is that even though I spoke Spanish fluently, this was obviously something they managed to a larger extent than me. Looking back, not speaking perfectly might have made the situation less intimidating as it somehow changed the relation between us and made it more informal as well as giving them an upper hand. I also think the fact that I had contacted them through their friends, which I knew quite well at the time, led to a more relaxed and informal atmosphere. We often laughed and joked, and the girls were curious and not afraid to ask questions. They were asking about the thesis, what “sociology” was, my country and my family. They also asked more personal questions such as if I had any children or if I myself wanted children in the near future, something that could be a result of a certain sense of female community as I was young and female like them (Thagaard 2003:101). Looking back I think this combination might have placed me in the role of an understanding, curious friend, more than a professional sociologist.

Before I started my interviews I had considerable knowledge about the subject, a necessary prerequisite for any research project (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). I had also spent considerable time with girls who were from the same neighbourhood and the same age as my informants, some of them even went to class with them and had grown up with them. However, as I met with my informants for the first time I realized that I still had had preconceptions of young mothers. Affected by the stereotype often portrayed in research and public notion, I had seen them more as victims than rational actors. During the first couple of interviews this was quickly re-assessed, as they made an impression on me with their strength and motivation.

3.4 Analyzing data

As often recommended when using the qualitative methodology I was doing several parts of the research simultaneously (Silverman 2005). I did the interviews during two months, which gave me time to transcribe and reflect over each interview, and also to start writing and thinking about the analysis throughout the process. Doing the majority of the transcriptions directly after the interviews was useful as I still had an impression of the situation of the interview and could add certain aspects to the transcription that otherwise would have got lost. Transcribing recordings means translating from oral to written language, but it also

involves a certain interpretation of data (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). In my case, this also involved an additional translation, from Spanish to English. I first transcribed all of my interviews in Spanish, where the initial version was written in an oral informal language involving all sounds such as laughter, pauses or repetitions - highly valuable for later analysis. However, in the abstracts presented in the final text, this was translated into English and a more formal text, both to maintain the integrity of the informants and to make the text more user friendly.

After transcribing I started categorizing the interviews into different subjects and themes, and started comparing different interviews and their subjects. I did not go by any pre-defined method of analysis, but by what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:239) characterize as a *bricolage*, a mixture of various available tools. Among other things I used tables, graphic figures and stories to find patterns, themes and groups. The heterogeneity in the material was something that got increasingly more visible as the process continued and I found it important to maintain this aspect through the analysis. At the same time, there were patterns and similarities within the nine informants that stood out. An important question was therefore how I could manage to show this complexity in addition to showing the lines and the patterns.

In the final text I have tried to present a great variety of data for several reasons. I found it really important to let the voices of my informants be heard. Silverman (2005) underlines how the readers are often lacking access to the data and therefore are left to depend on the researchers' interpretation. To strengthen the reliability and validity of the research I have tried to present a great deal of *low interference descriptors* (Seale 1999 in Silverman 2005), preferring direct quotes over my reconstructions of what they said. I also used thick descriptions, this way giving the readers access to a great deal of the data on which I based my analysis, strengthening the quality of my research (McDermott and Graham 2005). This, as well as contextualization, also help the readers to understand the actions of my informants, which will also be of ethical importance (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:95).

3.5 Ethics

Ethical aspects are crucial to obtain good research and are involved in all the different phases of the research process in qualitative research (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Widerberg 2001:28). However, Kvale and Brinkheim (2009) accentuate four areas that deserve a more thorough discussion in relation to ethical aspects. My reflections related to the informed confirmation and the role of the reseracher have all been presented earlier in this chapter. Considering the third aspect, I maintained the principle of confidentiality (NESH 2006). This means that the informants remain anonymous; all the names are pseudonyms and personal characteristics are changed to a degree where it will be harder to recognize people but still give the desired background information. All the personal information about the girls, as names, was stored in another place or codified.

Considering the consequences the research can have on the participants is also another principle in ethical justifiability (Kvale and Brinkheim 2009; NESH 2006). What could be the consequences of this project? I had reflected on this before I went to Argentina, as I was worried that doing interviews with young mothers in a marginalized area could potentially be ethically irresponsible. However, the positive consequences can sometimes outweigh the negative ones (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The goal of social research should be to improve the situation for the group who is being researched (Kvale and Brinkeheim 2009), and this was also something I had in mind. Increased knowledge about the issue could raise more awareness and contribute to a more nuanced and presise information about young mothers, i.e. *“to solve the problem it is necesary to understand its complexity”* (Adazco 2005:37). Nonetheless, I was also aware of the potential negative consequences for the girls I interviewed, both as individuals and as a group. I had a responsibility to treat them the best that I could, not only during situation of the interview. I also had a responsibility through the later process of the thesis with regard to how one is relating to their personal stories, interpretation and the final presentation of the results. As the interviews are their personal stories, using fragments in the analysis represents problematic issues, as some aspects are taken out of context where they might loose their original meaning. I also had to be careful when it came to interpretation as well as presenting the final results.

As I had reflected on a lot of the potential ethical problem areas beforehand, most of them were relatively easy to handle. However, one aspect I was unsure about was whether I should

pay my informants. Paying informants is also a debated subject in Norway, but there seems to be an agreement that this is not recommended (NSD 2009). Nonetheless, ethical rules should always be understood in a context (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:87), and it is clearly different to pay a young mother in Oslo than a young mother in Soldati. This was different and needed to be reflected on, not only because I met with different traditions and practises in local research, but most of all because I felt bad about having a lot of resources but still using their time without giving anything back. As recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:96) I consulted other, more experienced researchers within the field. Was it normal to pay informants in Buenos Aires? Discussing these questions with Grigaitis, who not only knew the specific subject but also knew the local culture, was extremely useful. Her opinion was that the best ethical option would be to pay them on an hourly basis. This could be a good way of giving back to the girls what in some cases represented lost time at work, and therefore also less money. In the end I decided not to pay them, but rather buy them a little gift for their baby to express my gratitude. When I mentioned this to people from Soldati they also agreed on this solution, as they felt simply giving them money would have been disrespectful and would have felt degrading.

Another aspect I had to confront during the interviews was the potential conflict between ethics and getting interesting data (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:184). Maintaining the ethical principles means not only taking responsibility for the knowledge produced, but also *how* it is produced (Widerberg 2001:84). In some situations we touched upon subjects that I felt could have been really interesting, but if I had any doubts about whether my informant was comfortable speaking of this I would not enquire further. One example is the use of birth control. I always asked them if they were using any contraception when they got pregnant. Some of them started giving me long answers and did not seem uncomfortable at all, but if anyone gave me a short yes or no I would not ask them further.

4. Villa Soldati

In this chapter I will first give a short description of the area of Soldati and then a presentation of my informants as a group, before I end the chapter with a short individual description of each one of my informants. This will not only function as an addition to the previous chapter on methodology, but also as an introduction to my later analysis, where a more detailed knowledge about the local habitat and each informant will be useful for a more detailed understanding.

4.1 Villa Soldati

Villa Soldati, together with Villa Lugano, is one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires (Bianco and Correa 2003:38). The area used to be a garbage dump, but when a second wave of immigrants came to Buenos Aires around 50 years ago, the area developed into a housing area. The majority of the people living in Soldati are first or second generation immigrants, mostly from Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru, but also from the northern provinces such as Tucuman, Jujuy and Salta. In general, the unemployment rate is high. Many work in other parts of town and have to commute several hours a day. The men often have manual labour jobs and work in construction or as craftsmen. Many of the women are housewives, or work in textile production or the cleaning industry. Working as *cartoneros*, recycling carton and plastic, or doing so-called *changas*, short term jobs, is also common. These types of jobs will normally earn 800 pesos a month, some 500 pesos below the poverty line. For a house in Soldati, the rent could be somewhere between 100-200 pesos a month.

The neighbourhood is about 9 km², and with about 41 000 people living in the area, the density is quite high. The majority of the houses have two or more floors as it is normal to expand the house by adding an extra floor when the children get older or the family grows. However, tall houses represent a risk because the unstable ground is not adequate for housing and building houses containing more than two floors is forbidden. In recent years there has been an improvement in the living conditions, among other things concerning public infrastructure like pavement of the roads and electricity. The government pays for water and electricity, making this area quite affordable and attractive for people of lower income. The

water supply is quite stabile and drinkable, but the electricity is causing some problems. While the electricity is free, the gas is not, leading the majority of the households to use electric stoves and heating systems. The electric system is short wired and fairly insecure, and because of a high load on the system it frequently overloads and ruins electric equipment, in some cases also causing fires. As in many other villas, there is a problem with access to public services such as ambulances and fire trucks causing the neighbours to solve the problem themselves using water buckets or getting hold of a private car.

4.2 A description of my sample

As the majority of the inhabitants in Soldati, my informants were either immigrants themselves or children of immigrants who had come from neighbouring countries such as Bolivia or Paraguay. The families varied in size, from one to eleven siblings, although the majority had around 3 - 5. In all but one case the families consisted of two parents, but often the men in their families were their stepfathers. The majority of the men had manual labour jobs, such as working in construction or plumbing, doing *changas*, short term jobs, or were unemployed. The mothers worked as waitresses, in cleaning or stayed at home with younger siblings.

Three of my informants were single. One was left by her boyfriend when she got pregnant and one had to leave him behind when she moved to Soldati. The third one was separated from her boyfriend at the moment but they still maintained a close relationship, and she was confident that they would get back together again. Regarding the other ones, all their current partners were the fathers of the children. In some cases the status of the relationship was not clear, one of them was married and the other ones were *en pareja*, a stable relationship.

None of their partners had complete secondary school; some of them had only primary school and the majority had incomplete secondary school. In general the boyfriends had lower education than the girls. Only one of them was studying as well as working, and the other ones preferred working over studying, either because of economic necessity or because they “did not want to”. Their partners worked in delivery, restaurants or in construction. In the cases where the couples were together, the boyfriends contributed economically to the household. They and their families would also be involved with the children, in some cases

also babysitting while the mother was attending classes, this way enabling her to continue with her education.

4.3 Education in Soldati

From Valeria Gracia, who has been working as a teacher and social worker in Soldati for more than a decade, I was told that regarding education, the situation in Soldati was similar to a lot of other poor neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires. Education is valued, but at the same time it also represents a challenge, both for the parents and their children. The parents often work in other parts of the city and spend 12-14 hours away from the house. As a consequence, the children often spend a lot of time on their own and have to take the responsibility of attending classes, doing their homework and studying for exams. Many children struggle in school and have low self esteem and belief in their own ability to succeed, and if their parents have little schooling themselves, they have little ability of helping them with school assignments.

The schools in the area have limited resources and are often overcrowded, with up to 40 students per teacher. The students get served food during school hours, which for many is an extra motivation to attend. However, I was also told that some parents who could afford it preferred to send their children to other private schools in the area, complaining about demotivated students and frequent strikes among the teachers¹⁰. Regarding secondary schools, there are a lot of girls participating in secondary school, but there is also someone who has to work. In some schools, one has the chance of taking a practical degree, of secretary or electrician, and this is often a preferred option. Studying past secondary school, is not common, although I was told there have been some changes the last years following an economic improvement in the area¹¹.

¹⁰ Conversation with Mercedes Villegas, September 2008

¹¹ Conversation with Berta Baspiro, October 2008

4.4 Profiles of my informants

To show the complexity and the variety within my data I will briefly present each of the nine cases.

Jessica

Jessica is 19 years and has a baby that is one month old. She is already back in class and is about to finish secondary school. At the moment she lives with her mother, her brother and her stepdad, in the same house where her mother has her own restaurant. Her boyfriend through six years works in delivery during the day. He helps her out a lot, both financially and practically, for example by looking after the baby while she is in school. Her family is originally from Bolivia and is highly educated. They had high expectations for her future and wanted her to get higher education. When she announced her pregnancy and that she was keeping the baby there was a big conflict in the family. This was also caused by a conflict between her boyfriend and her mother, as her mother wanted her to get “*someone better*”.

Maria

Maria got pregnant when she was 17. Her on-and-off boyfriend left her when he found out that she was pregnant, so now she has two two-year old twin girls that she is raising alone. She lives in a one room apartment with her mother and her two siblings. Because there is no one to watch her kids, she cannot work nor study. Her mother supports the family with what she gains from working in a bakery. Maria is frustrated with her situation. She is not contributing to the household and she is stuck alone in the house all day. The routine and boredom, as well as not being able to contribute economically to the household, are some of the reasons why she is planning to find a part time job the upcoming semester. She said she does not regret having her children but is still constantly reflecting on her own situation. For not using protection she blames the living conditions in the villa and being young and naïve. She feels a strong responsibility for keeping the same thing from happening to her younger sister and her other friends.

Gloria

Gloria, 19 years old, has a 7 month old son. She had forgotten to take the birth control pill when she got pregnant, and when she found out she did not wish to have a child. It was her 8

year older boyfriend, now her husband, who really wanted to have the baby. Becoming a mother she had to change her future plans of a longer university career, but she is still studying. To help her study her parents let her and her family live in their house. Her mother is also looking after her son while she is at school. She quit school for a couple of months while she was pregnant but is now back in school and is about to finish secondary school. When finished with her degree in foreign trade Gloria really wants to work - not only for economic reasons, but also to be independent and not have to ask for money from anyone. As she says *“these days everyone wants to be equal, everyone wants to work”*.

Victoria

When Victoria, 21, got pregnant at 19 her mother threw her out of the house. She had a troubled pregnancy where she was forced to move around, living and working with different relatives. She has now reconciled with her mother and is in the process of buying one of her houses. This is where she lives with her two kids, 2 years and 6 months old. She has been with the father of her children for over 5 years. They are currently having a fight and he moved out of the house. However, she believes they are going to reunite again very soon. Victoria is now about to finish secondary school. She is a little late because she left school to work a couple of years when she was younger. As with Jessica, Victoria comes from a highly educated family in Paraguay. She wants to be a lawyer and she finds it really important to study - not only to get a job that pays better, but also *“to be someone”* and to provide a role model for her children. Among other things she showed off her abilities when she was the one leading the campaign resulting in the school now offering a free day-care for the mothers attending classes.

Maca

Maca is 20 years old. She lives with her mother, her father and her two brothers in a three story house where she shares a room with her 8 month old son. Her boyfriend, who is both working and studying, goes to her house every day after work to spend time with her and their son. Her mother works folding clothes in a hospital where they also have a nursery available for their staff members. This way Maca is able to continue secondary school during the daytime. When not at school she barely leaves the house. She says the biggest difference in her life is the lack of freedom and the responsibility of having a child. After secondary

school she wants to keep studying. It might have to do with tourism, but she still has not decided yet as she did not have any future plans before getting pregnant. Right now her future focus is to get a stable job. Then she can contribute to the household and help provide a stable home with her boyfriend and her baby obtaining “*a better future*”.

Gladys

Gladys, 22, lived in Soldati until she was eight years old and she still has lots of family members living there. Now she lives in her parents’ house in the province of Buenos Aires together with her six siblings and her six month old daughter. When she was about 15 years old she dropped out of school, as she said “*it wasn’t for me*”, and started to work instead. She is still working 8 hours a day in a clothing factory close to her house. Her boyfriend works in a hostel. With their salaries combined they are able to provide for their child. She was really afraid that her parents, especially her conservative father, would react quite badly to the news of her pregnancy. However, everything worked out fine even though their parents on both sides would prefer them getting married as fast as possible. Her immediate plan for the future is to continue working but also finish secondary school as part-time studies. This would have pleased her parents as well because they want her to obtain “*a better future*” and find another job. She knows it will be tough, but is sure that “*with effort one can do anything*”.

Lidia

Lidia got pregnant right after she and her boyfriend started dating. She lived with her mother until she was pregnant in the 5th month. Then the pregnancy started showing and they decided it was the right moment for them to move in together as a family. Now they live together in the two-bedroom apartment they share with her boyfriend’s father and two brothers. Economically they manage with his day time job, a governmental plan and some help from their parents. She has just finished secondary school after having to repeat a couple of courses she missed before. She managed to study because her boyfriend, also 19, is working during the day and can watch the kid while she attends evening classes. Her plan is to get a daytime job so they can save up for their own place and form “*a real family*”, but also because she wants more children in the future. During the evenings she will start to study Work Relations at the public university, The University of Buenos Aires (UBA).

Vanesa

Vanesa is 21 years old, originally from Bolivia, but has now lived in Soldati for a couple of months. She chose this specific neighbourhood because they have several close family members living here, making it easier to get a job and a place to live. She lives with her two sisters, her son and her nephew in a one room apartment in Soldati - two of them are working making clothes during the day while the third one is at home watching the children. She does not have too much contact with the father of the child because of the distance. They are planning on staying in Argentina for a while, but are not too comfortable with the Argentineans, as she finds them very different from Bolivians.

Claudia

When she was 17, Claudia was in school repeating classes. Then after one year of dating her boyfriend she got pregnant and left school. Her mother did not want her to have the child, but she and her boyfriend were sure with their decision. After her daughter was born she and her boyfriend moved in together and Claudia started working in cleaning. However, she quickly got pregnant again and had to leave her job. Now she is 21 years old and lives with her partner and her two daughters on the ground floor of the house of her partner's parents. They manage financially with what her boyfriend makes, as they do not pay rent. She also has practical support from her eleven siblings and mother that lives nearby. She still wants to finish secondary school as she thinks this will make it easier to get another type of job that she will like more. However, it is difficult finding someone to take care of her children, especially since her youngest daughter has several medical problems. As a result, she is now spending her days at home with her children.

5. Stories from Soldati

This chapter contains a presentation of my data and will provide the basis for further analysis and discussion. Although these aspects I present are all interconnected aspects, I have chosen to split this chapter into three main areas.

In the first part I will look at some of the approaches to contraception, reactions to the pregnancy and considerations of abortion. Among other things, these aspects can give us an indication as to whether having a child at this moment was something planned, or if this represented a break with their future projects. Even though there are limitations related to information and access to contraception in Argentina, earlier research suggests that the main reason why young girls do not use contraception is because they do not have a good reason to avoid a pregnancy. Relevant questions would therefore be; was the pregnancy expected? Did they use contraception at the time? What was the girls' reaction to the pregnancy? How did their partners and parents react? And to which degree did they consider alternatives, like having an abortion?

In the second part I look at why education was considered important, both for themselves and their parents. I will also take a look at some of the new challenges facing young mothers who wants to continue with their education, and how some girls are able to adapt to the new situation as a result of a joint effort between their partner, family and the school.

In the last part I will take a closer look at other life projects, such as having a house and a family. Growing up in Soldati, what kind of future life project do these young mothers envisage? Is there a conflict between motherhood and extra-domestic work? And how has having a child affected their future plans?

5.1 Youth pregnancy

5.1.1 It was half and half

All my informants said the pregnancy was a surprise and that it was not planned. Also those who did not use contraception said it was unexpected, even though they knew they could get pregnant;

No, I'd left it. [I: So you more or less knew?] Of course, surprise, but surprise that I got pregnant, or like, I knew that in any moment it could happen because I wasn't using protection (Lidia)

I was a lot of time like this [without using contraception] and I never got pregnant, but I knew that it would happen one day. I didn't use protection, and there you go. [...] I realized it, but I still couldn't imagine it. I wasn't expecting it (Maria)

Even if they knew that it would happen eventually, they were still not expecting to get pregnant at that moment. The surprising element was not that they got pregnant, but the timing of the event.

Non-existent or irregular use of contraception was something that characterized the majority of my informants. If they knew they could get pregnant, how come they still did not use contraception? Marias reflection on the subject might serve as a useful illustration of some of the complexity related to the use of contraception in Soldati;

Maybe they receive it [information], but there are girls, who don't realize it and they'll have sex and say, I don't think I'll get pregnant this time. The same thing with the guy, I don't want to use contraception, you know? I think that's why. The father of my children, we used to always use contraception, but it came to a moment when we stopped protecting ourselves [...] I had a mother who talked to me, use protection, use protection, but you know, sometimes one is in ones own head. And it depends, it depends on the man and it depends on the woman. That's what's important. The woman has to put herself in respect and say, I want to continue with my life, so let's use protection. That's what I think [...] Guys supposedly protect themselves in their own way, but we know very well that it's not like that. They know how to protect themselves in their way, but I'm aware of the fact that still, one can get pregnant. And maybe at that moment I didn't understand, I listened to him, I didn't know how it worked, but you know. Maybe love is to blame for all that (Maria)

This shows how the use of contraception is affected by several different aspects. Lack of correct information about contraception, the myth of one's own infertility and young naivety can contribute to a notion that the girls do not think they will get pregnant. If the guys do not want to use protection, this is something they can take advantage of. A lack of understanding of biological aspects and how contraception works can make the girls vulnerable if they are confronted with suggestions of alternative ways of protection that might prove to be inefficient.

Cultural expectations of love, gender and sexuality need to be included in the discussion. This is also worth having in mind when considering the case of Maca, who described their use of contraception as; *"Mostly he was using condoms. But sometimes he didn't. But the majority of the times, he did. So..."*. Condoms are the most common type of contraception, but also a type of protection that put a lot of the control with the man. If men control the use of contraception, and do not want to use it, what options do the girls have? From Maria's perspective, the woman should *"put herself in respect"* instead of *"listening"* to the man. However, with these restrictions in mind, to what extent is resisting men's dominating position an option for girls?

As Maria mentions, one would often need a reason to insist on the use of contraception, for example *"to continue with my life"*. This might indicate that having a child at this age would result in the opposite, *"stopping"* one's life. However, as we will see later, this would often require a project that is stopped or restricted, a reason not to become a mother at this point. Even though some of the girls, as Lidia, had plans for after secondary school, there were also several who did not have any plans or knew what they wanted to do. For some, their life and their future plans were described in terms such as *"destiny"* and *"whatever God wanted"* (Claudia) or *"day by day"*, *"what I have to do"* (Maca). Not having a plan would also mean not having anything to lose over an unexpected pregnancy, and no project that is threatened by motherhood.

When they found out they were pregnant, some were happy about becoming a mother. *"I always wanted to have a child"* (Victoria, first pregnancy). This might indicate that becoming a mother was something natural, expected and wanted. However, this was not the right moment; *"I knew I was going to become a mother some day, it's not that it wasn't"*

going to happen to me. But when I got pregnant, I wanted it to be later, at 25” (Gladys).

Having a child a couple of years later would have been preferable for many reasons;

I think I would have completed school if I hadn't gotten pregnant at 18. If I had gotten pregnant at around 20 or something, I think that would have been better, it would have been different, under control, with a secure job, I think that would have been the difference. And not leaving school, I would have learned more (Claudia)

Claudia recognizes how having children affects schooling, and by waiting it would be easier for her to finish secondary school. Material security would also have provided a different, more controlled situation, where she had more control of her own circumstances. It is also worth noting that the preferred age to having ones first child is only a couple of years later than when it happened. This insinuates that after finishing secondary school, having a family might be the ideal and expected next step.

The fact that the pregnancy was wanted, but not necessarily at that moment, created a certain ambivalence in their reactions; *“Afterwards it was like, it wasn't the right moment, but it was wanted. Like it was planned, but it wasn't the right moment. It was half and half”* (Maca). This *“half and half”* description of the pregnancy seemed to be a characteristic for many of my other informants and might contribute to an understanding of the “unexpectedness” of the event. The question was not *if* they would become mothers, but *when* it would happen. Nonetheless, a mistimed pregnancy is not necessarily an unwanted pregnancy. This can also illustrate some of the difficulties related to defining a pregnancy with concepts like *wanted*, *planned* or *desired*, as also the mothers themselves have problems defining their own pregnancies in these terms, and their perspective is also likely to change over time.

Despite the illegality of abortion, almost all of my informants talked about decisions that had to be made, indicating that having the child might not be the only alternative. However, even though the pregnancy was badly timed, abortion was not an option for most of them; *“I felt kind of... weird at the same time. And the other thing was that I wanted it. I didn't even think about abortion because it didn't even occur to me”* (Victoria, first pregnancy). In other cases the reactions were more reluctant, and the girls seemed to accept the situation with a certain resignation; *“it's done”* or *“there is nothing you can do about it”*, indicating that they did not see any other options.

In other cases there was an acknowledgment of the existence of abortion, but this was still rejected as an alternative;

After I got pregnant I said, it's okey. If it's my destiny to get pregnant and have a child... If I get pregnant I'm not having an abortion or nothing. The day I get pregnant, I'm pregnant and I'll have it (Gladys)

Getting pregnant is considered a result of destiny, even though contraception is not used. This logic might be seen as an expression of a fatalistic attitude towards pregnancies, there is nothing you can do about it; it is out of your control and subsequently there are no choices to be taken. Nonetheless, even in cases where the reactions initially were more negative and there seemed to be options, abortion was still rejected; *"I wanted to kill myself. But you know. Afterwards I would have to think about that I was about to have a child and didn't let him come"* (Maca). The idea of one's responsibility over a child's destiny and life shows that moral issues can also restrict the alternatives by characterizing them as morally inferior.

5.1.2 I didn't want this

Compared to the majority of my informants, some girls were more motivated to use contraception; *"Of course, I was using protection, but one week I forgot to take the pill and that's how I got pregnant"* (Gloria). Not only bad luck or coincidences made contraception fail, but also medical issues. After her second pregnancy Victoria wanted to study and started to use birth control pills, but she soon had to leave them as they affected her health; *"and I thought about using something else, Like IUD¹², other things, but it was too late"*. Compared to condoms, birth control pills might indicate a more long-term commitment to contraception, as this is a type of protection that requires more planning than other alternatives. In addition, it is also a form of contraception where the girl is in control, which might indicate a more pro-active, modern gender role (Margulis 2007).

Both of these two informants wanted to start longer studies at university. A plan of studying might increase the motivation for using contraception because this would require them to postpone motherhood for some years. This seems to be apparent in the case of Jessica where an alternation in her future plans seemed to change her attitude towards contraception;

I had sex for two years and during a lot of time I wasn't using protection. I used the method of 12 days before and 12 days after and I was never late. Then at my fifteenth, my period was late because of the nerves and I said to my boyfriend, I want to talk to you about how we are going to use contraception because I'd like to study. And then we started using contraception and then not even three months afterwards [I got pregnant], I wanted to die. And then I went to the doctor and he told me it was a very inefficient method (Jessica)

Before having a future project that would be negatively affected by having a child, there was no need to take special precautions to avoid a pregnancy. However, with an aspiration of further studies it might be worth going through the extra trouble of using contraception and maybe also confront a possible resistance from the partner. Still, a motivated effort seemed to have failed because of lack of deeper understanding of how contraception works.

Judging from their efforts to use contraception, these informants were motivated to avoid a pregnancy. If one still gets pregnant in a situation like this, how does one react? Even though they all reacted negatively to the pregnancy, abortion was not an option for all of them;

I didn't want this. But it happened. And I wasn't expecting it, as I lost so much, going out, graduation trip and now it's all gone. That's it you know. What can you do. In my head I told myself, "why, why", but it's gone and that's that. I did something wrong, I'm responsible (Jessica)

The situation is accepted despite acknowledging that having a child would negatively affect one's life. By doing something wrong, having sex and not using contraception, one also has to accept the consequences and take responsibility for one's action. Even though they might have been inhibited from controlling the situation, they have still been irresponsible or immature, and it is therefore their responsibility to face up to the situation. This is another example of how restrictions on choices regarding abortion are not just financial, or by law, but also cultural and moral.

Nonetheless, despite these various limitations, there were some of my informants who initially wanted an abortion. *"At first I didn't want to have the baby. But then I talked to my boyfriend and he told me, let's have it"*, said Gloria. As her boyfriend was older and *"more*

¹² Intrauterine Contraceptive Device

mature”, he wanted to have the child. A similar thing happened to Victoria, where her boyfriend and her mother persuaded her to postpone the abortion until it was too late;

I didn't really want the second one. My idea was to study, I wanted to study. One [child] you can bring everywhere, but with two you can say it gets complicated (Victoria, with her second pregnancy)

Her story might serve as an illustrating example of how having a future project like studying, not only affects your attitude towards contraception, but also abortion. Before she had her first child, she did not use any form of contraception and rejected having an abortion, even going through a conflict with her family because she insisted on having the child. However, afterwards, she decided that she wanted to study and therefore started using contraception. Faced with her second pregnancy, she initially wanted an abortion. What had changed? One interpretation might be that she did not mind having the first one, as she considered it to be easy incorporating one child into her everyday life. However, studying would be complicated to combine with two children. With a future project that would be inhibited, limited, or even impossible with a child, the possible negative consequences could superate the risk of having an abortion.

Both the commitment to contraception, the reactions and the consideration of abortion was different among my last group of informants. They were more motivated to use contraception and also more positive towards abortion, which are both ways of avoiding an unwanted pregnancy. This might be because all of them had plans of going to university. This represents a future project that would be negatively affected by having a child, and they therefore have a reason *not* to get pregnant at this time.

5.1.3 She had problems with the future

Similarly to the majority of my informants, when Claudia found out about her pregnancy she “*got scared because... For what my mother would tell me*”. As expected, their parents were not happy about the news. A few, like Marias mother, accepted and understood the situation; “*She more or less knew, she always told me to use protection, and then the rest was my decisions. As I had a boyfriend and everything she more or less understood the situation*”. However, most parents were not that understanding. The importance of not getting pregnant had been a topic in the family for several of my informants; “*My mom*

always told me I shouldn't get pregnant. Because of school, it gets more complicated when you have a child. I think that's why she got angry" (Gloria). Among most of my informants parents a preoccupation of how a child would affect their schooling and their future was the main reason for their concern;

My mother didn't have problems with the pregnancy you know. She had problems with the future. I hadn't finished school, and she wanted me to have a profession or something. That's why she got disappointed, she wanted me to finish studying and have children afterwards (Maca)

The problem was not the pregnancy in itself, but the future consequences. Having a child at this moment would mean to brake with their parents' expectations and ambitions, not only with the possibility to keep studying further and get a degree, but related to the order of events;

She wanted me to keep studying. I don't know, maybe she thought my life was going to go bad because I got pregnant, I think that's why, she didn't want to realize it, she had thought everything out in a different way (Claudia)

There might be differences between the two generations, both in ambitions and expectations, but also in the consideration of how a child would affect their lives and future. Their parents would have loved for them to organize things "in a different way", first finishing school and *then* have children. Therefore, a child would be considered an interruption of the future that was planned/hoped/expected of them.

5.1.4 The decision is yours

Some of their parents also worried about whether the father of the children would step up to his new role;

Maybe she reacted badly because of him, my boyfriend. She thought that as he was very young, he was just a kid, maybe he wasn't going to take responsibility, and maybe he wasn't going to work. Because he was so young she didn't think he was going to be responsible (Victoria)

This preoccupation is also an acknowledgement of the reality of young men who often escape the newfound responsibility of fatherhood. Among my informants, it was only Marias boyfriend who reacted this way; "*He ended everything. You can say he's the kind of guy who doesn't want obligations*". The other ones were either positive or acceptive of the pregnancy,

but made it clear that the girls had to make the final call whether to keep the child or not; *“He told me, the decision is yours; I’ll be at your side”* (Maca). Sometimes they were also happy about the news; *“When I told the father I saw he was happy, he was all like “yes, yes”. Also we were really in love, you know, it was more the idea than having it”* (Jessica). Having a child together can be a confirmation of love and the relationship, but becoming a father can also provide boys with a certain social status, as it can be a confirmation of a man’s virility and manhood.

To become a father had consequences and implied a certain change of lifestyle; *“After he found out he said, ok, now we have to get a grip, let’s gather money to buy something, to do something with our lives, right”* (Gladys). Becoming parents would imply a change from not doing anything, to do *something* with their lives and start to plan ahead. This involves becoming responsible, provide economically for the family and then buy a house. However, as the man is often expected to provide economically for the family, for a young man from a villa without secondary education, it might be difficult to find a job that provides for a family with today’s high unemployment rate. By accepting the financial responsibility of raising a child, he would also decrease his own chances of continuing with his education. That their own parents therefore would react negatively to this news was something their boyfriends were aware of, *“he got half sad and half happy, because of his parents”* (Gladys). Similar to the reactions of the girls’ parents, also his parents considered having a child at this moment to strongly affect his, and their, future;

His parents also want a future, a different future. I’m not saying that a child complicates things but they didn’t want a child, yet (Gladys).

His family didn’t want me to have it because they said we were very young and had our future ahead of us and that we would destroy our lives (Maca).

Having a child would obstruct the possibility of a different future, and this was not the right moment to have a child. They were still too young to have a child, it was too soon.

5.1.5 With or without their support I’ll have my child

In some cases the parents of the girls were clear on the fact that they did not want her to have the child; *“My family first didn’t want me to have it. I was arguing with my mum, she didn’t want to, and me pregnant, but it was a decision that I had to make and I wanted it”*

(Claudia). In the girls' opinion, they were the ones to decide whether they to keep the child or not. When this led to confrontation she was also willing to put up a fight for her right to keep the child; *"I didn't care and I kept going, with or without their support I'll have my child"* (Maca) or *"It happened like this and I said no, I'm going to have my baby, let's go, and I left"* (Victoria, first pregnancy). They were willing to continue alone, without the support of the parents if necessary. It could also be that even though girls might have a negative attitude towards her own pregnancy she will still have a different, protecting attitude towards her pregnancy faced with her parents' attempts or negative reactions.

In most cases the initial conflicts and resistance from the parents was resolved in a short period of time. However, for two of those informants who tried using contraception, the conflicts escalated to involve other family members and eventually became so serious that they left their homes during the pregnancy; *"When I got pregnant she didn't want anything to do with me. You can say she threw me out. I was three months pregnant"* (Victoria). In the case of Jessica, her mother involved other family members to help resolve the situation;

When I got pregnant she [her mother] didn't believe me. I cried and I cried, and then I told her no, and then my mother told me that she had to call my uncle. My mother told me; let's work everything out with your uncle and your godmother from Spain. She got here and we all talked about it but they wanted me to leave. That I should leave, if I wanted to have the baby then leave, take it out (Jessica)

In this case, she explained her familys reactions referring to their high expectations of her future career; *"Also my uncles [were disappointed], because I come from a family where the majority goes to university and it was like a deception"*. In both of these cases they had a family who had expectations of them going to university. This might be why the pregnancy is not only an issue between the girl and the closest family, but a conflict that affects other parts of the family. It might be that reactions to a pregnancy are based in an evaluation of how a child would affect their lives and future projects. A pregnancy would in this case have even stronger consequences than if the plan was to finish secondary school and then have a family. For them, not only would having a child be an event that was mistimed with a couple of years, but would rather disrupt and obstruct their main life project and plans.

As we have seen, the main preoccupation for the parents of my informants is how a pregnancy will affect their daughters' education. In the majority of the cases, the expected plan would be to finish secondary school before one started a family. In the following part of

this chapter I will show that there are several reasons why education is highly valued among my informants and their families, and that this might be why their reactions were so strong.

5.2 Education

As we have seen, fear of the negative effects that a pregnancy will have on their daughters' ability to continue in school is the main reason why their parents react negatively. However, they themselves would in most cases have preferred to postpone motherhood until they were done with secondary school. Why is it so important to finish secondary school? What does it mean for my informants and their parents?

In the first part I will take a look at what affected the girls and their parents' valuation of education, and how education is seen as a hope of a better future. In the second part I will take a closer look at how my informants handled the combination of having a child and continuing in school. Did they drop out? And if they did not, how did they adapt to the new challenges?

5.2.1 Education – a valued project?

Schooling was valued for several reasons, both from the girls and their parents. Their motivation to pursue education seemed to be centred around five areas; social mobility, economic security, knowledge, identity and motherhood.

For both their parents and the girls themselves, education was a way of obtaining social mobility. Many of their parents had not finished primary school, and no one had completed secondary school, *“They didn’t finish, they couldn’t either because before you couldn’t. They didn’t finish primary school. Like they say, I have to finish no matter what so I become something better than them”* (Gladys). In their childhood, their parents often had limited possibilities of schooling due to material restrictions, but also because they grew up in countries where you have to pay for education. By giving their children the possibility to study, they provided them with the chances they themselves never had, and this was something the girls were expected to take advantage of, so they could become something

“better” than their parents. Their daughters had not only better chance of schooling because they belonged to a different generation and had their parents support, but also because they lived in Argentina where education is public and they therefore had more opportunities;

I wanted to go to Bolivia, but there is not a lot of opportunities there, maybe you can't. It is not like this country where they have public education, in the university. There you have to pay everything (Jessica)

If their daughters took advantage of these possibilities they could obtain a better future than their parents; “*They want a different future for me, that I don't keep working where I worked, that I finish school, that I get a degree in something*” (Gladys). By finishing school one would have access to better jobs that would again provide for a better future for the next generation.

Then you have a title, more knowledge, you can get something else. A future. I think they worry about my future. That's why they want me to study, to have a better future and everything (Maca)

This was also part of the girls' motivation;

I want to get a job that isn't a job where I have to clean. I want a good job. I want to keep studying to learn a little more and be able to do other things. A profession, I don't know if working in an office but not work in a family paid by the hours, or work in a cleaning company, it would be something else. That is worth something (Claudia)

The increase in knowledge that education would give you, would also create further possibilities and chances to avoid the manual labor jobs;

I told him, if you don't want to study, specialize in something, because today, when he was two months without work they asked him for secondary school, if not you have to clean tables, he did a lot of that (Jessica)

Education would also be a way of providing financial security for the future, through access to a job. As several of the positive aspects of education, this became increasingly more important as they had children. The ambitions and plans their parents had for them seemed confirmed and reinforced by their newfound responsibility as parents. Access to better jobs and becoming someone would make it easier for them to provide their children with a better, more financially secure future..

It's sad, when they ask you something and you say, no, I don't have anything, that hurts. That's why I try to study, to find something and work so they'll have and give them what they want (Victoria)

Education also had a value in itself, as it meant to have gone through a struggle and represented a victory and an accomplishment; *"Right now it's more for my daughters. That they see, for better or worse, that I studied. Like an example"* (Victoria). Therefore, their struggle was also a reason for their children to be proud of them; *"I hope I can continue, to be something, so one day my baby can say, my mother did this"* (Jessica).

Both among my informants and their parents, education also has a value in its ability to create a social accepted identity; *"She wants me to study. She wants me to finish, that I still finish. That's why she's helping me. I'm going to be someone. That's what she wants"* (Victoria). Finish school would mean to become a person of value. This is also closely related to other positive effects of education, as a way to obtain a better job with more prestige and therefore obtain social mobility. As education provides a way of obtaining a better job, this might be why education is the way to "becoming someone". The school in many ways represents an alternative and a contrast to the neighbourhood they are living in. This might not only be related to financial aspects such as better jobs of value, but also of the possibility to become a person of value, a person that is worth something, that is socially recognized.

Another aspect of education was how this would enable them to become better mothers and contribute to their childrens future education; *"Because one wants to learn more, tomorrow when they're in school and knowing how to explain them something"* (Claudia). As their parents themselves did not have much education, it might have been a problem for them, as for many other children in Soldati, to find someone to help them with their schoolwork; *"tomorrow when his children come home from school and say daddy, I did this, and well, that he knows, that he understands"* (Jessica).

An interesting aspect related to the value of education is how other family members apart from their parents affected my informants view and valuation of education. Both Jessica and Victoria had families where going to university was normal and expected, and in Victorias case she also found rolemodels she could relate to and that gave her inspiration;

I like it [law]. Also, my uncle is a lawyer. He lives in another country. My uncles and my aunts are also lawyers, they're women and lawyers. A year ago my female cousin also became a lawyer. At UBA¹³. Obviously it's been forever since she started because she had to leave it. She started making clothes with her friends, then started to study again, she kept going like that until she finished. And you know, you can do it little by little as she did (Victoria)

It seems as for Victoria that her aunts, and especially her cousin who, studied law at UBA, represented something she could relate to. She had the same background as her, attended the same university Victoria was planning to attend, and yet managed to complete a university degree, by struggling hard and taking it step by step.

The value given education is therefore on many levels. Education is given value as a means to obtaining a better job, even a profession, and thereby securing a better material standard, and economic security. Most strikingly, education is given a value in itself, as something of great value to be in possession of. To be educated therefore means being a person of value, through your achievement and knowledge. This means education is valued as a means to being a better mother, both as an good example to the children, but also because it gives them the opportunity to help the children with schoolwork, and to better support their children financially.

5.2.2 Continuing in school?

When I interviewed them, 5 of my 9 informants were studying. While three of them had followed a normal progression in their education, two of them were older because they had dropped out of school at an earlier stage. Of the four who were not studying at the time, one of them had left school earlier, while the rest of them quit school during their pregnancy.

In school

The new challenges facing the young mothers were often concentrated around three areas; time, money and childcare. For them to successfully adapt to this new situation without leaving school, support from their families was crucial. There were various ways the families

¹³ The University of Buenos Aires, the public university in Buenos Aires.

would help them out. Direct economic support from their parents was not normal as the girls were often aware that their parents were already on a tight budget themselves, *“she also has her expences and her job, so it’s like I’m embarrassed to accept her money”* (Lidia). Another reason was that they preferred being independent and being able to support their own family. Nonetheless, there were other ways their parents could help them out, such as reducing their expences by letting the couple, or just their daughter, live in their house. This made it easier to continue in school, as it reduced the expences and made babysitting more accessible, *“My mother told him, that while I’m studying, he can come to my house. And afterwards, we’ll figure something out ourselves”* (Gloria). Often the mother or other female relatives, like younger sisters, looked after the child when necessary. Gloria had a mother who took care of her child all day while she had classes, and even brought him to school so she could feed him. In the case of Maca, she manages to continue her classes at daytime because she can keep her child at the kindergarden at her mothers work place; *“I leave in the morning, drop my son off in the kindergarden, I go to school, when I leave school I go home, I clean, I cook, and then my mother brings him home when she’s done”*.

These girls also had partners who seemed to be active in the childrens lives and supported the girls both practically and financially. In all cases, the men were the main economic provider. All of them were already working, but to adapt to the new situation they would often try to look for a better position or a job that was better paid, *“Before he had a job just to get money so he could go out, but when I got pregnant he started working to get money for him”* (Lidia). Their work schedules were often adapted to the girls’ classes so he could watch the child while she was in school and visa versa, such as in Lidia’s case, *“I have class at night, he works in the morning and come back in the evening. So when he comes back I go to school”*. In some cases their partners family was also supportive in several ways; they would babysit when needed, letting the young family live in their house or contribute economically when the money was tight.

The schools also had ways of supporting young mothers. Several mentioned that young mothers had become more common; *“It’s already a lot of girls who are pregnant or with kids. So it’s like it’s something normal. They show more consideration”* (Lidia). Jessica is one of those who seem happy with the support she gets from school, as she says both the teachers and the students are very supportive and understanding. She also confirmed a certain change in the attitude towards young mothers, leading to more acceptance and flexibility;

They used to throw them out. Before you had to be with your boyfriend and be represented by a lawyer so they wouldn't throw you out. It's a religious school, that's why. It's like they're against it. Not anymore, whether you are or aren't in a relationship they don't ask you if you are in a relationship or not, but they let you bring the baby at least for an hour so you can breastfeed it, you know, they support you, if you're not with your boyfriend, okey, then come, they support you at school. It's good (Jessica)

The girls often managed to attend class until they give birth. Afterwards, several schools operated similarly to the one of Gloria. Even though they give everyone forty-five days of legal absence after birth, she went right back to school a month after having her child. At her school, you are not allowed to bring the child, but you have an hour each day where you can breastfeed. The teachers will often be understanding with tests and homework, and their friends at school can also help them by bringing them assignments. Another adaption was the choice many of them had to choose between different schedules, making both working and babysitting a lot easier. Nonetheless, having someone who could take care of the child during class was a big problem for many of them. After Jessica had her first child at 19, she was in a fight with her mother, and therefore did not have anyone to take care of her children. This made it hard to stay in class;

I had to pay for someone to watch them. I had to pay my friend five pesos every day, from Monday to Friday to go to school. Sometimes I didn't have [money] and I had to owe her or maybe I couldn't go to class. It was complicated (Jessica)

However, she was not alone in struggling with these issues. There were also several other girls in her school that wanted to continue but were not able to, because they did not have anywhere to leave the children. Jessica was one of the students fighting for implementing free child care in her school, which she now says are helping a lot of the mothers in her school continue.

Not in school

Gladys was the only one of my informants who had dropped out of school earlier and never managed to go back to school. When she was 16, five years before she had her first child, she quit school after having repeated classes;

I didn't want to study anymore, and I said that's it, its not for me, because I'd already repeated a year, and I said, I won't go back to the same class, I was embarrassed, I'll rather start working (Gladys)

Even though she still has a plan of going back to school, she is also planning to continuing full time at the clothing factory she is currently working. As her mother and her sisters watch the child while she is working, for her, *"having a child doesn't stop you from doing anything"*.

Considering the three other girls who left school when they got pregnant, Vanesa was a special case, both because she was studying at university at the time of the pregnancy, and also because she came to Soldati just months ago. For the others, however, they both left secondary school as they got pregnant;

I was studying, I was repeating fourth grade. Then I got pregnant and I couldn't finish (Claudia)

At that moment I was studying by night, and you know. I left all that, I had to leave it. Today I don't study (Maria)

As the children were born, it was especially the fact that they did not have anyone to take care of the children that led to problems in their ability to continue. When Maria got pregnant at 17 she had to leave school, and since then she has been at home with her two daughters. Because she is single she does not have a partner to support her, and as her mother is away all day at work, she has to watch her children and cannot leave the house. When she talks about the importance of contraception she often use her own life as an example of how having children at an early age will change your life; *"I tell them, look at me, I can't go out, I can't do anything"*. Childcare is also the biggest issue for Claudia, who also stays at home with her two children. For both of them, having two children is also an extra economical challenge, but without free childcare provided by parents or friends, it is also difficult to get a job that would enable them to pay for childcare services.

For the four who are not in school, there are various considerations as to whether education is still something to aspire to, or if this represents lost opportunities, as a consequence of motherhood. Gladys and Claudia both started working as they quit school, but still valued education and had plans of continuing next semester; both as a way of providing a better future for themselves, but also for their children. However, as they both have to prioritize working over schooling at the moment, they are also aware that it is going to be complicated.

5.3 Future projects

Education is a big part of my informants' life and future plans. However, their future plans also involve other projects. For many of them, having your own house and family is the main future project of aspiration. At the same time, they also want to work, more than anything, to be able to provide a good future for their child. However, in some occasions their own and others expectations conflict, and makes it hard to prioritize.

5.3.1 If I don't work, how will I provide for the child?

For the girls who were still in a relationship with the father of the child, their partners had the role of the main economic provider. Still, none of my informants pictured themselves being home with their children, but wanted to work. Combining motherhood and working might be hard, but at the same time it was often a necessity.

If not, how will I provide for the child? Because with my partners salary it's not enough. The baby is going to grow and want other things. That's why I want to work (Gloria)

When one salary is not enough to provide for the family, providing economically for the children is also the responsibility of the mother. However, when asked whether they would have liked to stay at home if their partner could have maintained the family on his own salary, they would still have liked to work; *"I think it's better to have two paychecks, I think that's better"* (Claudia). Working was not only to relieve the present situation, but was also preferred as a way of investing in the future; *"to obtain something better"* (Maca).

Several mentioned that it had been a change in the gender roles related to work;

Today it is like working is part of the woman. Today the men take care of the children and the women go to work. The men don't like going to work, they don't like getting up early (Maca)

The traditional, expected gender roles where the private was the womans responsibility and the public of the male had gone through a process of change. "Head of the household" is a term used to describe who is financially providing for the family, and traditionally this has been the male. However, now, as they are both working, this term is no longer valid. *"No one is "the head of the household" because all of us are working"* (Lidia). Sharing the financial

responsibility could contribute to a more even balance of power. Instead of having one provider, they were both contributing financially at equal terms, helping each other; *“For me it’s the best that both work, that both contribute and help each other, that’s why they are in a couple. That’s what the word “couple” means, two people”* (Maca). Being in relationship was part of being equal and contributing to a common project, the family.

For some, working and be able to provide for one self can also be a way of obtaining independence and autonomy;

I want to work. I want to be someone independent as well, so I don’t have to ask him for everything. I don’t like when they give me things. Today we all want to be equal, that all of us work. I don’t like that only the man works, I would also like to work (Gloria)

Being financially independent also meant being equal and independent from their partner. At the same time, this also refers to, as earlier mentioned, a certain change in the gender roles. Compared to previous times, today everyone wants to be equal, which entails that everyone was working. This independence could be from their partner, as in this case, but also related to family relations. The motivation could be independence from the partner, but also related to the family. Many of the girls continued living with their parents after having a child, and were often very dependent on them to cope with their everyday life while raising a child. In the case of Maria, she was currently at home watching her two children, and her single mother provided for her, her children as well as her other two siblings;

I feel useless in the house, because my mother works, she provides for me, my daughters and my siblings. By not being able to help economically one feels useless. Be able to work. It’s something with that. I want to work to get some air, and also to help my mother, that’s the most important. And be able to buy my own things, because I don’t have any clothes and I can’t buy them anything. To buy my things when I need them, if I need something I don’t have to ask her. I don’t ask her for anything anyway because it’s enough what she buys for my daughters, diapers, milk, you know (Maria)

For her, working had several meanings. Having a job would provide her with financial independence from her mother. At the same time, she also felt bad knowing that she and her daughters represented an additional financial burden on the family economy. Working would also provide both her and her children with more money, independence and stability. In addition to these aspects, working also meant to participate in other arenas, not being excluded to the private area of your own house and home, but have access to the public. It is

also worth noting that the role of a stay-at-home mother might not be enough to obtain an identity and a feeling of self-realization. For her, being useful meant also meant contributing financially.

5.3.2 He doesn't want me to work

Although my informants understood working as a necessity, there were still some conflicts related to their role as a mother and/or students. Even though some of the girls admitted that it could be complicated combining motherhood and working, or that it could be hard to leave their children at home, they still wanted to work. In some instances however, others wanted them to stay at home with the children, such as Marias mother, *"she doesn't want me to work, she wants me to dedicate myself to the girls"*. In some occasions they boyfriends did not want them to work, or preferred that they prioritized studying over working; *"The father of the children says I shouldn't work. He wants me to be at home, with the girls and if I want to do anything, that I'll study"* (Victoria). That the men do not want them to work can be considered a resistance towards a change in change in the gender roles. For the men, they have traditionally been expected to provide for the family economically, and that she has to work could also be seen as a devaluation of him as a man and his manhood. However, as the girls were still motivated to work and thought they could combine the different activities, they defied the wishes of the others, *"whether he wants it or not, I'll start working this year"* (Maca).

Even though others sometimes did not want them to work, the girls felt obligated towards their children to work to provide them with a better future. To them, choosing between working and studying was often a larger conflict. There was an acknowledgment that working, studying and being a mother was a lot of work; *"I want to work, but if I keep studying I prefer not to work because I feel that I won't be able to do everything at the same time. I'll rather do it little by little, step by step"* (Jessica). The option of not working was not available for everyone as someone had to work. Faced with the immediate needs of providing for the family, working is preferred. However, if the basic needs were covered there was more of dilemma. Education and working can both be considered investments in a future, and sometimes it was difficult to choose the best alternative;

This year, my real plan is to work. Try to obtain as much as possible for a house. And then study. If I can, I'll study. If not, keep working. But first study. My mother has told me she'll help me and everything. But it gets complicated, you know. I'll get prepared little by little, this year I'll work. Of course if I can I'll work and study, but it's a lot. With the two girls, and the job, it's a lot (Victoria)

There is a need to provide material security for her family, but at the same time she is motivated to study and live up to her family's expectations. This shows, as we have seen earlier, that financial restrictions in some cases do limit the girls' ability to continue in school and aspire to higher education. At the same time, it might be that even if there is no immediate financial need for working, working is still preferred over studying. This can both be because there is a responsibility for a mother to provide for a future for her children and her family, but also because education might be considered a more insecure investment. For the parents, education is still valued as a long-term investment, but their daughters might both be affected by others' opinion on education, as well as see the need of obtaining a house and a future for their children as a more valid use of their time.

5.3.3 To finish, work and own a house

For the majority of my informants, starting a family was a project they planned to start after finishing secondary school; *"That was my idea, to finish, work and have a house. That was my idea"* (Victoria). This ambition or plan seems to be similar to what many of their parents wanted for them. An expected life course would be to finish secondary school, buy a house, and then have a family;

I would love to finish school no matter what, and nothing else. And buy a house. All their lives everyone wants a house. Before having a family, everyone wants a house. So I would love to have my house, be with my child, with my partner and nothing else. That's what I hope for (Gladys)

Having one's own house was something almost all of my informants mentioned as part of their future plans and dreams. The ideal future life consisted of a house, a family and a job. For some, one child was enough, but the majority wanted a couple of more children;

I see myself with one more child. And to have my own house, working, finish my studies, work and... have a house. A family. Having your house, your children, then you're... living. You can live on your own, and you have to take care of your children, that's what's good (Lidia)

Life starts when you have a house and a family, that is what everyone aspires to. Starting ones own family and live independently is a project that is valued and aspired to. Having ones own house also meant being prepared for the future;

I: And what is the difference of having your own house?

With your own house at least you have a house, if there is a discussion and he comes tomorrow, it's your house. Also for the children who are going to come. Because if we all live in one house and there are more children in the future, in a couple of years, then it's more difficult, then this house is too little. In your house you'll have your things... (Lidia)

A house was material wealth and a better life, as one would have more space. In Soldati, where life in many ways is characterized by instability and the inability to plan the future, a house would mean security and stability against unplanned events like conflicts with ones partner or a possible extension of the family.

In the next chapter, I will summarize and discuss my findings.

6. Analysis

After having gone through several aspects related to becoming a young mother, I will use this chapter to discuss some of my findings further. To create a background for further analysis, I will first give a short summary of my findings related to pregnancies, education and life projects. I will then discuss what I deem to be the most interesting aspects, and by drawing on earlier research on the field, seek a deeper understanding of the relation between life projects and early motherhood.

In this final part I will start by focusing on how the main future project for the majority of my informants seemed to be having a house and a family. By doing this I will show how the initial future projections is closely related to youth pregnancy, through different factors such as attitudes to contraception and abortion. I will argue for an understanding of these pregnancies as mistimed, because this interrupted their plan of finishing secondary school. For their parents this seemed to be an interruption of their hope of social mobility. That a substantial part of the poorest youth in Argentina has been excluded from the school system should be considered when looking at young mothers' ability to stay in school. However, some of them manage to continue if resources such as babysitting, flexible solutions and financial aid from partner and family is provided. To finish the chapter I will see how having the opportunity to work and owning a house is ultimately what the girls aspire to, and how this is seen as a part of having a family and being a responsible mother who provides for her children.

6.1 Stories from Soldati – the main tendencies

6.1.1 Getting pregnant

Within my group of informants there seem to be two main tendencies related to contraception, reactions and attitudes towards abortion. The majority of my informants used contraception irregularly or not at all. They knew they could get pregnant, but still characterized their pregnancy as unexpected. Their lack of using contraception is not only related to access and information about the use of contraception and the risk of getting pregnant, but is also linked to several other aspects such as gender roles, and their partners' resistance to the use of contraception. When they found out they were pregnant, their reactions were in most cases characterized by a certain ambivalence. While motherhood was something wanted, expected and natural, they wanted it to be later, after they had finished secondary school. However, they accepted the situation and abortion was not an option; either because there was nothing to do about it, or because it was immoral and irresponsible. It might seem as the pregnancy was wanted, but mistimed.

Not all of the informants showed the same tendencies. Because they aspired to further studies after secondary school, they were more committed to the use of contraception. With a future project that would be negatively affected by having a child, they used contraception as a method for postponing motherhood, but were unsuccessful. When these girls got pregnant, some of them considered abortion. It seems as this group had more ambitious, elaborate future plans than the latter, who often seemed to have limited their aspirations to having a family and work. The girls who did not consider abortion, also seemed as though they might have been less motivated to avoid a pregnancy due to their irregular or inconsistent use of contraception.

Almost all of their boyfriends accepted the situation and supported their decision, and some of them were also happy about the news. As a contrast, the majority of their parents reacted negatively to the news. The parents' reaction was of great importance to the girls, since support from their parents was of great importance for their ability to raise their child while staying in school. Having a child at this moment would make it harder to study, and would therefore negatively affect their future and represented a break with their parents' expectations. When the girls insisted on having the child this resulted in initial conflicts

which were normally solved after a while. However, where the parents and the family had high aspirations of further education for the girls the conflicts seemed more severe.

6.1.2 The value of education

Education was valued among my informants and their parents for several reasons. Their parents expected their daughters to take advantage of the opportunities they had in the public education system in Argentina. The parents were all immigrants from other south-American countries without a public education system, and they had great aspirations for their childrens education. In my interviews, I recognize four different values attributed to education. With education, meaning at least finishing secondary school, one would have a better chance of obtaining material security and non-manual jobs, and thereby acquire the intergenerational mobility their parents wish for. As education was an accomplishment and represented a great struggle and personal endeavour, having finished school was also a value in itself – a personal achievement that meant greater social status. Education and schooling was also valued as a way of “becoming someone” and obtaining a social identity, especially linked to having a profession, and/or the ability to be economically independent. For the girls, education was also given a value related to motherhood, as it was seen as an important part of securing a better future for their children economically, but also because it would contribute directly to the ability of being a good mother, as one could more easily help their children with their homework. Many of the positive aspects of education are therefore linked to having a child, because all these aspects of getting an education become more important when it is done for the good of the child, rather than for the good of one self. .

6.1.3 Young mothers ability to continue in school

Of my eight informants who were in school at the time of the pregnancy, three dropped out while five managed to continue in school. To be able to stay in school, they were dependent on their family, their partner and the school to support them both financially and with childcare. Another aspect is that almost all of the girls had aspirations to continue in university. This might both indicate a higher degree of motivation for education, but also more resources. Because their families support and motivation is so important to keep them in school, it is of crucial value to the girls that their parents value education, and are willing

to invest the time and money the girls need to continue in school. The motivation to stay in school are not enough, the girls also need practical help and economical and emotional support to be able to continue their education.

Out of the three informants that did not continue with their education, one had already dropped out of school prior to becoming pregnant, and had no motivation of going back. The ones who dropped out during their pregnancy had not yet managed to reincorporate, even though they were motivated to continue studying. Challenges related to childcare, as well as financial challenges, made working the most pressing issue. The motivation to stay in school are in itself not enough, to be able to continue their education, the girls also need practical help and economical and emotional support.

6.1.4 Life projects

For the majority of my informants it seemed as their future project was, and still is, having a family and owning a house. The ideal and expected run of their life course would be to finish secondary school, get a job and buy a house, and then start a family. At this point in life, having their child before they had finished secondary school and while still living with their parents, their foremost prioritization was to buy a house. A house would mean independence from their family, and would also represent them starting a real family together, and being ready for the future children who would come. The house therefore represents both emotional and economical security and stability.

Working seems accepted and valued among young women in Soldati. Working is a way of helping their partner and their family with their immediate needs. However, even if their partner made enough money to provide for the family, they would still prefer to work. Work is therefore valued not only as a source of greater material affluence, but also as a strategy for the girls to achieve independence and identity for themselves. Being at home with their children, taking care of them and “dedicating themselves” to being a mother, was not an option compared to having the ability to contribute to a better economy in a long- time perspective. This could mean to invest in a future for themselves and their family - the future that is represented by owning a house. Where working is not an immediate need, there is still a conflict between her wish to study, and her wish to invest in a materially secure future for her family, through labouring.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Life projects

Growing up in Soldati, what kind of life project is developed? From what I found, there seemed to be two different main aspirations for the future. The most common future project was to finish secondary school, and then start a family. Taking the context into consideration, it is not to be surprised that the majority of my informants hoped for the same as the majority of the young girls in the popular class, namely a family and a house (Geldstein and Pantelides 2001). As we have seen, education is valued for several reasons, but there are also many restrictions that limit the development of education as a life project. Material restrictions will limit what options that are considered possible, and also what is defined as valuable. With an everyday life characterized by marginality and uncertainty, a good future might be represented by financial stability, family and independence. At the same time there are also cultural restrictions. If motherhood is valued and seen as something expected and aspired to of young girls, this will, as Fernández (1994) comments, also contribute to exclude the ability to consider other life projects like education. Even if further education is desirable, first of all it might be clear that this is an unsure investment (Climent 2003), both because one is doubting one's own ability to go through with it, and because the unemployment is high and it is difficult to get a job.

With these limitations in mind, how can one explain that several of my informants still aspired to university? Even if they grew up in Soldati, it seems as though they still had access to more cultural resources. Because they came from a family where university education was common and expected, they had several advantages. The valuation of university education made them believe that it might be worth the investment, they faced more expectations from their family and had the confidence that they were able to go to university, what Smith-Battle (2007:357) refers to as “*intergenerational traditions of school success*”. In the development of a life project, both Luker (1996) and Pawlowicz (1996) accentuate the importance of female rolemodels. In this case it seems as a female cousin represented the rolemodel they could relate to, both because she was female and studied at the university but maybe in particular because she was coming from the same economic background and therefore

represented an alternative way of obtaining an education, involving a struggle she could identify with.

6.2.2 Pregnancies

As these girls knew they could get pregnant, but did not use contraception, would that define these pregnancies as “*wanted*” or “*desired*”, as suggested by Perrotta (2008)? Arguing that the girls did not use contraception because they “*desired*” their pregnancy, despite them saying otherwise, might be to underestimate the girls as rational actors. When discussing the choice of contraception, it is important to have in mind that besides restrictions related to information and access, the use of contraception is also affected by cultural expectations of gender roles and sexuality. My data seems to confirm what also Margulis (2003) and Zamberlin (2005) have found, namely that mens resistance to contraception can restrict young girls’ use of contraception. This might also be especially important in the cases where condoms were the contraception of preference, which, as shown by Zamberlin (2003), is a type of contraception that leaves men in control. Considering that several of my informants reported that they had stopped using contraception after a while, it might also be worth thinking about how contraception is embedded in cultural expectations and stories regarding love and sex (Zamberlin 2003). Ending the use of contraception might be a sign of faithfulness and reaching a different stage in the relationship, and therefore have a meaning related to intimacy and love. These aspects are just some of the examples of how the use of contraception is embedded in culture, and as Fainsod (2006) and Adazco (2005) point to, by not including the social context in the discussion about youth pregnancies, you will ultimately blame the girls themselves and contribute to an individualization of the responsibility and a depolitizing of the subject of contraception and youth pregnancies. .

At the same time, we have seen that also in the cases where one is motivated to use contraception this can fail due to misconceptions and wrong information. Not only do this illustrate the need for the sexual education that is about to be implemented, but also, as Gogna (2005) points to, that there is a need for a more integrated way of looking at contraception and prevention. First of all, as we saw above, cultural dimensions and gender roles need to be confronted and included in the subject. Secondly, in order to reduce unwanted pregnancies, it is not sufficient to know the importance of contraception. Effective

use of contraception requires a deeper understanding of how contraception and your body actually works, and maybe also more practical approaches to improve correct and efficient usage. Myths and misunderstandings can not just result in inefficient use, but as we saw, it can also make girls more vulnerable to misguided information and inefficient, alternative methods of protection.

Nonetheless, despite all of these restrictions on contraception, it might be that the connection I found between future plans and use of contraception might be another, complementary way to approach youth pregnancies. Following the arguments of Greco (2005) and Aiscar (2005), children in the popular class are not something that is planned, they “come”. As a result, you do not plan to have children; you plan *not* to have children. The use of contraception would therefore require a reason not to get pregnant, such as a future project that would be negatively affected by having a child. This is not unexpected, as both international (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Furstenberg 2003) and Argentinan research (Zicavo 2007; Geldstein and Pantelides 2001) have reached the same conclusion. A commitment to a future project is likely to increase the motivation to postpone motherhood.

Use of contraception should also be seen related to abortion, as these are both ways of avoiding an unwanted pregnancy. In addition to the financial aspects and the illegality, I found that several cultural connotations in many cases excluded abortion as a valid choice for my informants. The fatalism that Arai (2003) and Margulis (2003) mentions seem to be an inflicting factor. In the cases where pregnancy is considered a result of destiny, one is subsequently excluded from the ability to control ones body and future. However, I also found aspects of moral restrictions related to sexuality and motherhood that inhibited abortion among the girls who initially did not want the child. Their arguments are similar to what Checa et.al (2003) and Gutiérrez (2003) registered; one should take responsibility for ones actions and mistakes. Geldstein and Pantelides (2001) considere these social and moral judgements of abortion an additional limitation of the girls options, and I tend to agree. Even if they might have been unable to control the situation, as if their contraception failed, they still consider themselves morally responsible for the pregnancy and its consequences. These aspects taken into consideration, rather than characterizing youth pregnancies within this context as wanted or desired, I am more likely to tend with Furstenberg (2003); rather than having chosen a pregnancy, a lot of these girls have become mothers because they have not chosen abortion. Taking this one step further, if one consideres the choices and options

available to be limited enough it is even possible to bring in the concept of “forced motherhood” (Aguero et.al 2004).

With all these restrictions in mind, what characterized my informants who still wanted to have an abortion? Both Furstenberg (1991) and Luker (1996) argue that the consideration of abortion requires a certain level of resources, both cultural and financial. I would argue that this also tend to be the case among my informants. First of all, the girls who were positive to an abortion were also motivated to use contraception. As mentioned earlier, their future aspirations of higher education seemed to be the main reason for their motivation to postpone motherhood. To develop these future projects in a marginalized area like Soldati requires resources, both cultural and financial. Secondly, closely connected to the first one, it is likely as Fernández (1994) argues, that the resources enabling the girls to develop other projects than motherhood also are related to a more modern gender image. Following Grecos (2005) argument, having an abortion requires a more modern gender role because this implies a rejection of the naturality of motherhood. Thirdly, Margulis (2003) holds that the fatalism and “logic of now” in the popular class also affects the way one relates to body and sexuality. An abortion would break with this idea, not only by defying cultural expectations and restrictions, but also by taking control of the situation, of your life and your body. Therefore, there are several ways that class is affecting young motherhood.

6.2.3 Education

I found that education still seemed to be valued among my informants and their parents for many reasons. Even though several, such as Zicavo (2007), have found that social and historical context have reduced the belief in education as a way of social mobility, my findings seem to be closer that of Cafiero (2007). She argued that the motivation might actually be higher because work as an arena for social integration was increasingly reduced, and therefore the parents would go to great lengths to ensure that their children studied. This might also be confirmed by their parents’ reactions to the pregnancy, where the first and foremost objection was how this would negatively affect their education and thereby their chances of having a good future. Following the assumption that reactions to a youth pregnancy reflect life expectations (Furstenberg 2003), it is likely to believe that the negative

reactions from their parents reflected their ambitions and expectations for their daughters' future.

It might be worth reflecting over whether their parents' valuation of education present what Cecconi (2003) characterize as a *social mutation*. Considering the reality of education and social mobility in today's Argentina, is the value given education a transference of the parents' aspirations, but worthless in reality? Judging from the generational difference in their reactions to the pregnancy, one possible interpretation could be that this is a result of a difference in the value of education, and not just how this would be affected by a child. Their daughters, who have been socialized into Soldati, where education is considered a difficult task to achieve, might have a harder time becoming motivated to their parents' project of education. Do their daughters, who have grown up in Soldati, consider their parents' expectations to be realistic?

6.2.4 Young mothers in school

When discussing young mothers and education it is important to have in mind how poor youth are excluded from the Argentinean school system. There are several reasons why this should be brought into the debate. First of all, the most vulnerable girls, and also those who might be less motivated to continue in school, might have dropped out at an earlier stage. When we have seen that education might be the foremost reason to postpone motherhood it is interesting to see how this might have affected their motivation to avoid a pregnancy, both because they might not have a reason to, but also, as Pawlowicz (1996) argues, how an exclusion from other arenas increases the importance of motherhood as social identity and self-realization. Secondly, similar to the findings of Checa, Erbaro and Schwartzman (2009) it might be that those who drop out of school when they get pregnant might already have a problematic relationship with the school, be more vulnerable and have less motivation to continue. This was also observed in my data, where the girls who dropped out were repeating classes and taking night classes.

The girls who managed to continue in school might be characterized by having a more successful school trajectory, and several of them were also motivated for further studies. In addition, they enjoyed a support system in their family, which seems to confirm Zamberlin's (2005) findings that the family is of crucial value to keep young girls in school. For them to

be willing to invest time and money for the girls to continue in school, they have to value education highly. Apart from their family, it seems as though the changes and adaptations already implemented in the Argentinean school system is a highly useful, effective and appreciated tool for including young mothers in school. Schools with free kindergartens, a supportive and understanding environment and flexible school hours are some of the aspects highlighted by my informants. However, similar to the observations made by Smith-Battle (2007) and Checa et.al (2009), young mothers are often motivated to continue their education but lacks practical solutions to their daily challenges surrounding time, money and childcare. In addition, free childcare is not enough if the mother has to work to provide for her family. Even if working is not an immediate need, there is still a conflict between her studying and investing in an insecure future or start working immediately to invest in the future, in the form of a house for the family.

6.2.5 For the children

As Smith-Battle (2007) argues, becoming a mother can lead to a greater motivation for a different future and stimulate aspirations related to education and work. To some extent this was visible in my findings, especially among those who previously found themselves without clear ambitions or plans. However, as mentioned above, their motivation for continue education were often restricted by material limitations. For others, the ambitions and plans their parents had for them seemed to be confirmed and reinforced by the new responsibility of having to provide “a better future” for someone else.

Working seems accepted and valued among young women in Soldati. Similar to what Pawlowicz (1996) found, for the majority of them the main motivation was to create a future for their child. Providing financially for the child is another part of being a good, responsible mother. From this perspective, working is not competing with the project of motherhood, but rather an expected part of it, confirming Geldstein (1994). Their responsibility is not only being a stay at home mother taking care of the home and the children, but also providing and contributing financially to these material goals. However, as Geldstein (1994) has found, working is also important for other reasons, such as independence and identity.

For some of the girls, working was also a part of being a good partner, because they share the financial responsibility as a couple. However, as we saw, some of their partners resisted their

desire to work. This might be a result of a resistance to a shift in gender roles, which can lead to a more democratic relationship, but also cause conflicts (Geldstein 1994). However, as Zamberlin (2007) argues, sharing the financial responsibility might also be a possible solution to the issue of young fathers escaping their newfound responsibility.

7. Understanding the complex reality

In this last chapter I will see how my findings respond to my question of research. I will then quickly see how this seems to resemble earlier research before I will give some final reflections on young childbearing as a class-related phenomenon.

7.1 Early childbearing and life project

Through nine interviews with young mothers in an Argentinean shantytown, I have tried to come up with some answers to the question:

How does an early entry into motherhood affect the life project of a young girl?

For the majority of my informants, it might seem as though their main project was to finish secondary school, get a good job and then have a house and a family. The main problem they faced when they had a child early in life, was more restrictions related to their schooling. Motherhood was therefore not a large interruption in the life planes for those who already had dropped out of school. For those who were still in school when they got pregnant, and had ambitions of completing secondary school and then go to university, having a child was mistimed with a few years and made it harder to obtain the social mobility their parents hoped for. However, some of them managed to continue in school thanks to substantial support from their family and partner, in addition to a flexible school system.

Plans of education, work and motherhood all affect each other. While motherhood imposes several restrictions to the development of the other projects, it also seems as though the new responsibility is a motivation for obtaining education and work. As education meant being able to get a better job and provide more financial stability for their child, they seemed to be committed to finishing secondary school, although they might face challenges because they might lack some of the resources needed to achieve this goal.

7.2 This study in a larger context

Could these findings from Soldati contribute to a deeper understanding of early motherhood in other contexts? I would argue that my findings seem to confirm other research on the subject, especially local investigations within a segment of the urban popular class in Argentina, such as works done by Checa et.al (2009), Zicavo (2007) or Geldstein and Pantelides (2001). However, as I explained in more details in the chapter on methodology, it might be worth having in mind that some of my informants might represent a strata with more resources, sharing some characteristics with what Geldstein and Pantelides (2001) describe as “the integrated”, a segment of the popular class with certain traits similar to the middle class.

Despite Stern and Garcia (1996) arguments against “western” research, I also found great similarities within British and American research (Smith-Battle 2007; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Arai 2003; Furstenberg 2003; Luker 1996). As youth pregnancies tend to be a working class phenomenon, these are often projects done on marginalized segment of the population that in many ways are characterized by shared socio-economic conditions. Even if there are obvious contextual differences, aspects like class, gender and fertility are worth exploring in an international context.

7.3 Final reflections –early childbearing and class

I will finish this chapter by quickly recapping why young motherhood is so strongly class-related, and why young childbearing might be a problem.

At every step of the process, people who are already poor are more at risk of early pregnancy and childbearing. [...] Overall, women who already have limited chances in life are much more likely to bear children while still in their teens (Luker 1996:113).

First of all, why is young childbearing class dependent? Through this project, I have seen how resources, both cultural and financial, affect early childbearing in numerous ways. First of all, resources will reduce the chance of early childbearing through more effective use of contraception. As we have seen, there are many different factors inflicting in this, such as gender roles, fatalism, access and information. However, both from my own findings and

earlier research, the most important factor seem to be the development of a life project other than motherhood, which will give them a reason to postpone a pregnancy. For many, this could be represented by a plan of higher education, a dream of social mobility that would be disrupted by having a child. However, the ability to develop a different life project is highly dependent on initial resources, and might be fundamentally restricted when growing up in a marginalized area with few rolemodels or hopes for future or social mobility. “*Hope is the best form of contraception*”, and therefore, as Rich-Edwards (2002, in Adeszo 2005:49) accentuates, the response to teenage pregnancies should be to give young people the possibilities to construct another future. As he argues, when you are able to give the girls a good reason why they should not become mothers, coupled with information and access as well as combating the worst poverty, it is less likely that they will become mothers at an early age.

Secondly, once pregnant, having the child is not the only available option. However, in countries like Argentina, there are not only strong cultural and economical restrictions affecting their access to abortion, but it is also forbidden by law. Having the money to pay for a private clinic will both reduce the health risk and the risk of getting caught. Cultural resources will make one able to see the choices available and defying the cultural aspects of moral, responsibility and destiny. But first and foremost, the option of abortion is available through the same mechanism stimulating the use of contraception, by having an alternative life project that will be negatively affected by having a child.

Considering the current context in Argentina, and also in Soldati, it therefore is useful to reflect on which possibilities and future plans that are possible to construct. What does it mean to grow up in Argentina today? As another young girl from Soldati told me, *Argentina está yendo por abajo*, Argentina is going downhill. In a recent survey, the young generation in Argentina was found to have the lowest future expectations in Latin-America (Pagina/12 2009). Do the generation growing up in today's Argentina see their future involving hope of progression, improvement and a better future for the next generation? And if not, what are the possible consequences?

Having these aspects in mind, I find that when we focus on early childbearing and its problems, it might be a better idea to focus on what causes it in the first place. As Fainsod

(2006) argues, the real problem here is the poverty and the inequality leading up to these pregnancies.

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All the sources used in this thesis have been listed.

This thesis is 36 936 words in total.

Appendix 1: Agreement of consent

Spanish

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Me llamo Astrid Susaas, soy estudiante de la Maestría de Sociología de la Universidad de Oslo (Noruega), y ahora estoy haciendo el trabajo final. El tema del trabajo es el embarazo y la maternidad entre mujeres jóvenes en sectores populares.

Para saber más sobre este tema me gustaría hacer entrevistas a mujeres embarazadas o madres recientes, que tengan entre 18 y 20 años. Las preguntas se refieren a la experiencia de estar embarazada/ ser madre, la educación, el trabajo, las relaciones sociales, y también los proyectos para el futuro.

Para esto, se usará un grabador y se tomarán notas durante la conversación. La entrevista durará aproximadamente una hora.

La participación es absolutamente voluntaria y puede ser suspendida en el momento en que se desee, sin tener que dar ningún tipo de explicaciones. Toda la información otorgada será tratada de forma absolutamente confidencial, y ninguna persona podrá ser identificada en el informe final. Toda la información obtenida se volverá anónima y las grabaciones serán destruidas cuando el trabajo termine, esto es, antes del fin de 2009.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, puede llamarme al (15)31303832, o mandar un correo electrónico a la dirección astrid_es@hotmail.com

Este estudio está siendo reportado a la institución que protege la información sobre personas en Noruega (Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste A/S.).

Desde ya, muchas gracias.

Astrid Susaas

Suipacha 752, 9º

Declaración de acuerdo:

Yo he recibido la información, en forma escrita y oral, sobre el estudio de embarazadas y madres jóvenes, y quiero participar en una entrevista.

Firma:.....

Fecha:

English:

AGREEMENT OF CONCENT

My name is Astrid Susaas, I am a masterstudent in sociology at the University of Oslo (Norway), and at this moment I'm doing the final thesis. The subject of the thesis is pregnancy and motherhood among young women from the popular sector.

To know more about this subject I would like to do interviews with girls who are pregnant or recent mothers, who are between 18 and 20 years old. The questions will be about the experience of being pregnant/being a mother, education, work, social relations and also future plans.

To do this I will use a tape recorder and take notes during the interview. The interview will last about one hour.

The participation is completely voluntary and can be cancelled whenever you want to, without giving any kind of explanation. All the information collected will be treated with complete confidentiality and no individual will be identified in the thesis. All the information collected will be anonymized and the tape recordings will be destroyed when the work is done, that is, before the end of 2009.

If you have any questions you can call me at (15)31303832, or send me an e-mail to the direction: astrid_es@hotmail.com

This study has been reported to the institution that protects the information about people in Norway (Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste A/S.).

Thank you,

Astrid Susaas

Suipacha 752, 9°

Declaration of concent:

I have received the information, in written and oral form, about the study of young pregnant and young mothers, and I would like to participate in an interview.

Signature:.....

Date:

Appendix 2: Interviewguide

Cambio y continuidades-

Embarazo y maternidad entre mujeres jóvenes en Villa Soldati

La guía de entrevistas

Presentación:

De mí: Nombre, de donde soy, qué hago aca etc

De la tesis: el consentimiento informado – explicar, preguntas?

El tema del thesis

Repetir la voluntariedad

La situacion actual

Bueno, para empezar, me gustaría que me cuentes cómo es un día cualquiera en tu vida, qué haces?

Qué te gusta hacer?

Con quien/ es vivís?

Hace mucho que viven acá?

Tus padres, de dónde son?

Que hacen?

Trabajan?

Quién/ es?

Qué hacen?

Tu madre?

Estudió?

Trabajaba?

Estás de novia/ en pareja?

Hace cuánto?

Qué hace? (trabaja/estudia etc)

Cómo se llevan?

Como es estar en pareja?

Tenés amigas/ os? Qué hacen? (estudian/ trabajan, etc) Les gusta lo que hacen?

Tenés amigas que tienen hijos?

Cómo fue que quedaron embarazadas? (lo buscaron, no lo buscaron, situaciones de violencia)

Les gusta ser madres?

Tenes amigas que no son madres?

Qué hacen ellas?

Crees que ellas tambien quieren ser madres?

Por qué, por qué no?

Encontrás diferencias entre las cosas que hacen tus amigas con hijos y tus amigas sin hijos?

Estás estudiando?

En que año/ grado estás?

Te gusta? Por qué?

Trabajás? Por qué? En que trabajas? Te gusta? Por qué/por qué no?

Querés seguir trabajando en esto? si no, en qué?

(si no trabaja) Como conseguís la plata para pagar la comida, ropa, etc?
(familia/amigos/novio, etc)

Qué otras cosas hacés? (tiempo libre)

Como te sentís con tu vida actual? Por qué?

Cuales son las cosas más importante en tu vida en este momento?

El embarazo

Te acordás como fue que te enteraste que estabas embarazada?

Cómo te sentiste? (feliz, triste etc)

Por qué?

Lo esperabas?

Te estabas cuidando?

Cómo reaccionó tu familia?

Reaccionaron todos igual, hubo alguna diferencia?

Por qué pensas que reaccionaron así? (a partir de ahí indagar si le sugirieron abortar, o formalizar la relación, o qué)

Hubo cambios en tu familia a partir de tu embarazo? (por ejemplo, alguien que comenzó a trabajar para conseguir más dinero, un lugar propio para ella, etc)

Cambios en la relación con tu familia? (el lugar de la entrevistada y el de los demás)

Sentís que empezaron a tratarte de otra forma? Cómo?

Por qué pensás que pasó eso?

Y con tu novio?

Cómo reaccionó?

Por qué pensás que reaccionó así? (ver indirectamente si hubo presiones o apoyos)

Cambió la relación, empezó a tratarte diferente?

Y ahora, cómo están las cosas?

Siguen juntos?

Te está ayudando con el bebe? Como?

Le gustá ser padre? Por qué?

Tienen pensado algo para más adelante?

Amigas:

Tus amigas, cómo lo tomaron?

Por qué pensás que reaccionaron así? (ver indirectamente si hubo presiones o apoyos)

Cambió la relación, empezaron a tratarte diferente?

La escuela:

Estabas estudiando cuando te enteraste que estabas embarazada?

Cómo reaccionaron en la escuela ante tu embarazo? (apoyo, rechazo, etc)

En tu escuela se manejan de una manera especial con las alumnas embarazadas o mamás?

Qué hacen?

Qué ventajas y qué problemas habría para una chica que está estudiando y está embarazada/ tiene un bebé?

Estabas trabajando cuando quedaste embarazada?

Hubo algún cambio a partir de eso? (si dejó, la echaron, etc)

Pensás que se puede combinar el trabajo con ser madre?

(si contesta no) Por qué no?

Cuáles serían las ventajas y cuáles los problemas de trabajar para una embarazada/ mamá?

El sentido de ser madre

La maternidad y su propia identidad

Como te describirías a vos misma? (chica, mujer, madre, estudiante)

Que significa “ser madre” para vos?

Que significa “ser mujer” para vos?

Cuál te parece es la diferencia mas grande entre ser madre y no ser madre?

Por que? Como?

Que es lo positivo de tener hijos?

Y lo negativo?

Querés más hijos?

Cuantos?

Cuando?

Te sentís lista/preparada para ser madre?

(Para las madres unicamente): Como es ser madre? Te gusta?

La maternidad y los otros

Pensás que la gente te trata diferente cuando sos madre?

Qué pensas sobre las chicas que no tienen hijos? Y sobre las que tienen hijos?

En qué momento es mejor tener un hijo/ser madre?

Por qué?

Las chicas se preocupan por embarazarse?

Por qué/por qué no?

El futuro

Tenías planes para más adelante, antes de quedar embarazada?

Cuáles eran tus planes? (estudiar, trabajar, tener hijos, etc)

Y ahora, con el embarazo/hijo, cuáles son tus planes?

Pensás seguir estudiando? Por qué?

Recibirás algo de plata del gobierno para poder estudiar?

Y despues los estudios, vas a trabajar?

Creés que es común que las mujeres trabajan? Te parece bien?

Qué tipo de trabajo pueden hacer las mujeres? Y qué tipo de trabajo hacen más frecuentemente?

Y para los parejas, está bien que las chicas trabajan?

Y tus sueños? Si pudieras elegir, dónde te gustaría estar a los 25 años? (haciendo qué, con quién, etc)

Qué quieren que hagas tus padres?

Te parece que hubo un cambio en los últimos años donde más chicos y chicas pueden estudiar?

Informacion sobre el estatus socioeconomico:

Nombre (no hace falta apellido)

Edad

Nivel educativo alcanzado

Trabaja (sí/ no) En qué?

Vivienda (propia, alquilada, compartida, prestada, otra situación)

Grupo conviviente (cuántos son, vínculo)

Jefa/ e de hogar (quién es, en qué trabaja)

Planes sociales (sí/ no, cuál)

Terminar/cerrar

Yo no tengo más preguntas, vos tenés algo para añadir?

(Parar el grabador)

Como te pareció la entrevista?

Repetir las cosas éticas

Gracias por participar!